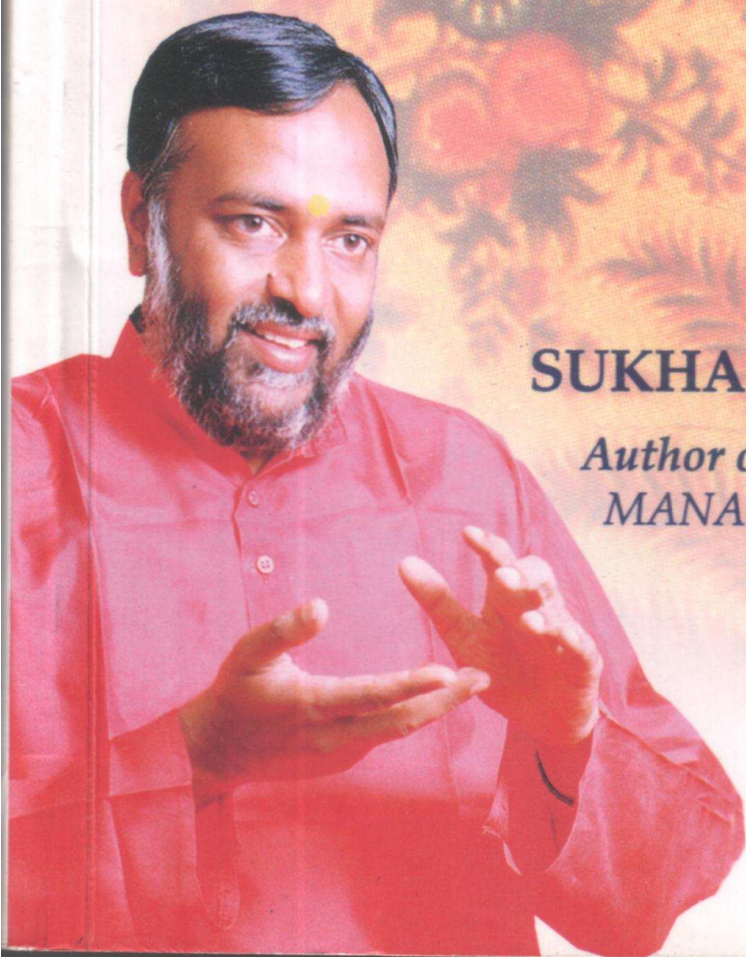


Oh, LIFE RELAX PLEASE !

Yogic Wisdom to Life Management



**SWAMI
SUKHABODHANANDA**

*Author of all time best seller
MANASE RELAX PLEASE*



Reflection

Rabindranath Tagore, in one of his beautiful stories has narrated about a beggar encountering a Celestial being.

One day, by the side of a beggar, a golden chariot with divine being descended from the sky. The beggar thought that he was lucky and would become rich. But to his surprise, the divine being asked him for alms. Cursing his stars and out

of disgust, the beggar took out a small Piece of grain from his bag and offered it to the divine being. The whole day, the beggar was very unhappy that he had lost a grain. Before going to sleep, the beggar opened his bag to see what he had collected throughout the day. To his great surprise, he found a piece of gold in the form of a grain. He immediately realized it was in return for what he had given to the Celestial being. He cursed himself for not having given all that he had in his possession.'

Learn to give. The more you give the more will you receive in return; if you hoard, it would only be for others.

We are often brain washed into serving the "I." Can we wash our brains for serving the 'We'? To serve the 'We' is being creative. When we are creative, a great contentment arises. The acme of creativity is the flowering of consciousness. There is no fulfillment more satisfying than this.

This book helps you explore the possible you' in the field of spirituality and management. Read, reflect, and digest the essence, so as to make your life fulfilling. Life lived fully is a gift that we can offer to ourselves. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a gift greater than the gift of life. Share this gift with others by presenting this book. One of the services to humanity is to share the wise knowledge of living. If we serve the universe, the universe will serve us. Let us experience the Law of Grace.

With blessings,

SWAMI SUKHABODHANANDA

FROM THE AUTHOR

I have always told myself if I cannot be happy here and now, I will never be happy anywhere. This book is an offering of my happiness.

The superficial way of reading this book is through intellectual understanding. The deeper way is by feeling the insights of the narration. The deepest way is where these insights and parables light up your mind in your hours of darkness and guide you like a friend.

Hence my invitation is to read this book not just once, but many times over like a daily prayer for prayer is not changing the Lord but changing you.

By ingesting the essence of this book, you will realize what lies before you and behind you are nothing in comparison to what lies within you. Enlightenment is looking for spectacles that are sitting right on your nose. This book is about awakening you.... like a wakeup call.

To do what you like and like what you do is indeed a divine work. Work is an opportunity to find oneself. This book helps you in finding yourself in all walks of life... intimate, family, work, social, and spiritual zones. In the process, you will be grateful to the weeds of your mind. They ultimately help your practice of being relaxed.

Being relaxed is wise. Begin with being wise and you will be relaxed. Being relaxed is a wise and an easy way to live life.

Life, thus lived will bring forth the peace of a rose garden and light of the luminous Sun as a part of your being.

Let your growth bring the best seasons of your life. This is my humble prayer for you.

I specially thank P. R. Madhav for editing this book. My special thanks to Mrs. Devaki Jaipuria for all her support. My salutation, to my loving mother, who is a living Goddess. My deepest gratitude to all my Gurus for whom I have no words to express. I offer this book to all my students who are like little lamps shining in the night, which the great Sun cannot do. This is my dream and I am sure you will join me in making it as your destination.

With blessings,

SWAMI SUKHABODHANANDA

FOREWORD

'Losing is victory postponed'

'World will forgive failures, but will not forgive people who have not utilised the opportunities'

This book contains many more such thought provoking maxims. Swamiji presents complex Vedantic truths in a simple manner like a sugar coated pill. The name Oh, Mind Relax Please! Itself creates curiosity among the readers.

This book blends the truths expounded by Allah, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahaveera and gives many insights to the readers.

This book provides solace and counsel to people who run away from the day to day problems of life. Swamiji's teaching guides one not to be upset with the problem; instead take problem as a challenge and solve it energetically.

This book is unique in its presentation where narrations are real life instances in the form of parables which touches the readers' heart. Besides, this book can be read from any chapter, but still it will stimulate the reader like a peeled banana, which can be eaten from any side, thus enjoying its sweetness.

Every insight presented in this book teaches us how valuable our life is. If one digests and uses the rich wisdom, one will attain peace in life.

CHIRANJEEVI
The Mega Star

Our heartfelt thanks to all enlightened masters & modern thinkers for their inspirational guidance.

Tips for reading this book

This book is designed to provide an all-round understanding of life. Modern education has led us to more literacy and less understanding. To snatch even 15 minutes time from the routine is a luxury that many can ill afford these days. But there is a need for us to nourish our souls with understanding. This is the dilemma that many of us are placed in.

- One can start reading this book from any chapter; each chapter is complete by itself.
- Let this book be your constant companion. If you are free for 5 minutes, read one chapter.
- If you are free for 3 minutes, turn to the icon of the Laughing Buddha. Every story and example communicates something deep for you to reflect on.
- If you have only 15 seconds, read the gist of each chapter... in the form of Yoga of Wisdom and Yoga of Action. Discover how relevant they are to your busy life.
- In case you are not able to spare even 15 seconds, just glance through any page on Contemplation. It will lead you to inner peace.
- If you are in doubt as to which chapter will be of interest... read the contents page for a variety of questions. Identify your question and read the respective chapter.
- Whenever you have a question or doubt, just open any page with reverence, and read on, especially the section of Contemplation or Reflections. You will find an answer in a mysterious way.
- This book has to be read in small doses and many times over to impart a conscious shock to one's mechanical life. Make this your family book. Let your family members read one chapter either in the morning or while retiring for the day. Read out at least one story every day to your children and bathe them in wisdom.

Weed out anything that is superfluous in your life. Remember to carry this book with you always. All you need is a commitment to spare as little as 5 minutes of your time. Magically, you will enjoy being secure and insecure as well. This understanding in small and simple doses will make you relax in this tense and busy world.

The purpose of living is the very life itself.

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Chapter-1

How Do We Relax?

How do we relax despite facing traumas in the unjust world that we live in? Why do fundamentalists disturb our lives? How to change the world so that we can live peacefully?

These are the basic questions in the minds of many.

A mind filled with tension and unhappiness is the result of a toxic centre. Such a mind creates problems to oneself and others. Fanaticism has many forms. It exists both within and outside. Very often, fanaticism is the result of a mind, which is toxic and finds reasons to justify violent acts.

In contrast, a mind, which is relaxed and happy, comes from a nourishing centre. Transforming a toxic centre into a nourishing centre is the hallmark of wise living.

Reflect on this story.

Buddha was addressing a large gathering of disciples. During the discourse, a person, out of jealousy, abused Buddha. Buddha lovingly replied, 'People are waiting to listen to my discourse in the neighboring village; please do come tomorrow.'

The man was shocked. He asked Buddha, 'Are you not hurt by my harsh words?' Buddha replied, 'In order to hurt me, you should have met me before my enlightenment. Just like a fire losing its potency when it contacts water, so too are your words; even though full of fury, when they reached me they lost their bitter tinge.'

This is the nourishing centre one has to awaken.

Man lives in the hope of changing the world, so that he would be happy.

Reflect on the story.

A father gets disturbed when his son makes noise.

He thinks of a device to calm his son. He tears a world map into pieces and asks his son to join them. To his surprise, the son comes back with the world map neatly pasted, in a few minutes. 'How did you do this?' asks the father. The son replies, 'Behind the world map, there was a poster of a man and I could join them easily.'

Let us change ourselves. The world will change by itself.

At the same time, let us not get lost in changing only ourselves and forget to include others in our growth. We live in an 'I and You' world.

Reflect on this.

To a question, 'Who is flying the kite?'

A boy replies, 'I am flying the kite.'

The tail of the kite says, 'I am flying the kite'

The wind says, 'I am flying the kite'

The string says, 'I am flying the kite'

Voice of the Lord said, 'Oh! Children, WE are flying the kite.'

Hence, the Vedic prayer says, 'Let us all be enlightened.'

We can relax in this unjust world only when we teach ourselves and others to strengthen our strengths and weaken our weaknesses.

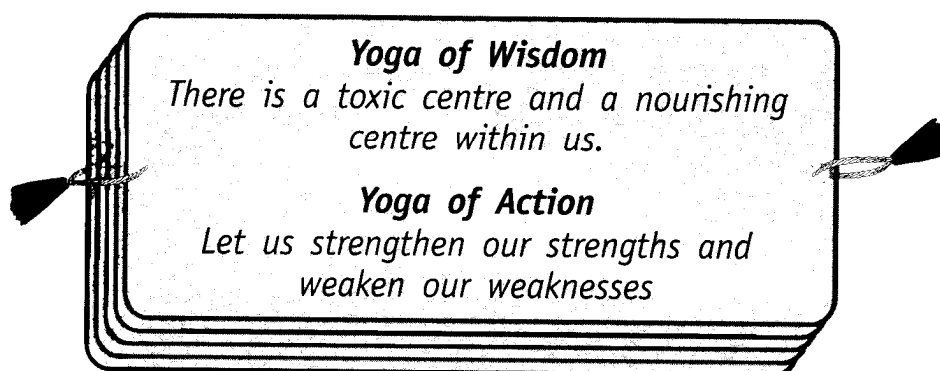
Whatever be our weakness, if we do not identify with it, the toxic centre in us will lose its grip on us.

Life is both fair and unfair. Learn to be a good finder. Studies have shown happy people are good finders and at the same time they have the courage to encounter unfairness.

Let our goodness come from our strengths, not from weaknesses. Then the magic of life will bless us.

Therefore, Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflections



Chapter-2 **Magic Glass Box**

Long ago, there lived a King who was highly respected and revered. The whole kingdom lived in harmony. The neighboring kingdom, out of envy, created a communal disturbance which spread to the entire kingdom. Even though people wanted to live in peace, the situation was out of control and their peace was shattered to pieces. The King tried his best to bring sanity amongst his subjects; but he failed.

The King sought the help of his Prime Minister to solve the tragedy that had befallen his kingdom. The Prime Minister obliged and asked for a month's time to come up with a solution. After a month, the Prime Minister came out with a unique solution. He placed a magic glass box at the centre of the royal assembly and made an announcement, 'Whoever sees himself in front of the magic box, will be completely transformed.'

And lo 'To the King's surprise, an interesting thing happened.

Hearing the announcement, people gathered in an open arena. The magic glass box was placed at the centre.

A group of people in the gathering were believers; they believed in such a solution, but did not come and stand in front of the magic glass box.

Another group of people were non-believers; they did not believe in such a solution and hence they too did not come and stand in front of the magic glass box.

Yet another group of people were not mere believers; but also missionaries in their belief. They went around preaching to others to come and stand in front of the magic glass box, but surprisingly they too did not come and stand in front of the magic glass box.

Another group of people were disbelievers and also missionaries of their disbelief. So, they went around convincing others not to stand in front of the magic glass box. They too did not come and stand in front of the magic glass box.

One more group of people, who called themselves pragmatic people, said the solution may be true and at the same time may not be true. Spinning this philosophy, they also did not come and stand in front of the magic glass box.

The last group of people--very few in numbers--was keen on experimenting. They came and stood in front of the magic glass box to see what would happen.

They were transformed!

The magic glass box reflected not only the aura of the body, but also the mind of the person who stood before it. This group of people realized that they basically had violence within. The violence outside was an expression of the violence they had within. They understood and changed themselves.

So, therefore, to change the world, one has to change oneself.

The teachings of all the enlightened masters is like the magic glass box. One has to look within and change oneself .The proof of changing oneself is in one becoming gracefully silent. In that silence of one's being, one would be loaded with joy, singing, and dancing. One feels ones own energy. Even if one is silent, one can speak without words. Such a person, even in silence, would radiate his presence in the form of a song and dance. Others can feel his energy.

But if one's being is not silent and transformed, one is bound to be lost in misunderstanding. This misunderstanding would create unnecessary chaos.

Reflect on this anecdote.

A woman with her young child was attending a spiritual discourse. In the middle of the discourse her child would get up and say 'Mummy, mummy I want to piss.'

After the discourse, the Guru called the mother and told her, 'Teach your child to use another word, so as to maintain the decorum at the session,' and suggested using the word 'sing' instead.

During the subsequent discourses, whenever the child wanted to ease itself, 'it would tell the mother, 'Mummy, mummy, I want to sing.' Only the Mother and the Guru understood the child's language; no problem and this continued for long.

The child grew up. He was sent to a hostel. In the hostel, he would wake up in the middle of the night and tell the warden, 'Warden, warden I want to sing.'

The warden said, 'This is not the time to sing.'

But he persisted, 'It is very urgent.'

The warden being confused said, 'Come near my ear and sing softly.'

One can only guess what could have happened.

We unnecessarily mess up things in life due to our conditioning and stop seeing the beauty in the present. Truth is not hidden behind the clouds. Truth is in front of us; but we have closed our eyes and ears to it. In fact, truth is in every element of our life; be it the trees, clouds, or stars. We just need to open our eyes and ears. It is said, Dattatreya, an Indian sage had 24 Gurus which included the sun, moon, flower, air, water,

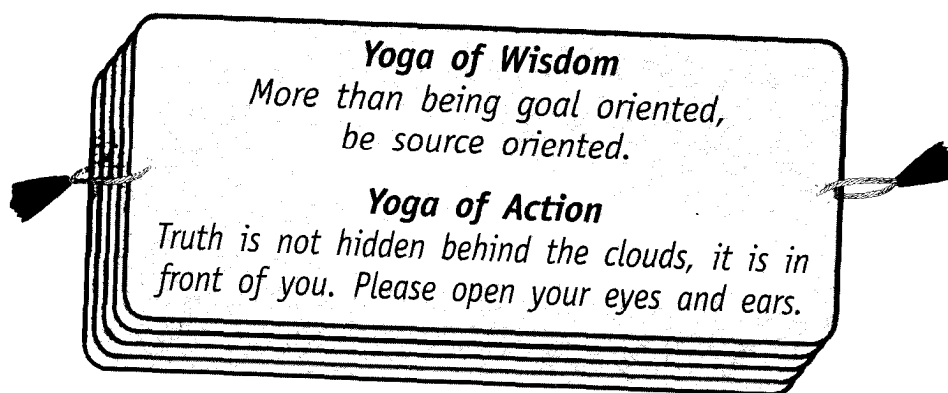
If our life is not transformed, then we land up only in desiring. Desire appears to be our great friend but in fact, it is our enemy. Desire is another name for discontentment. It fools us into believing that the present is not fine but the future would be. Desire is constantly being focused on the future, whereas life is always in the present.

Swamiji, what should I do in order to stop desiring?' asked a youngster. It is not a question of doing but a question of understanding. In desire, we always see the goal. The goal is the object of the desire, because we are 'goal oriented.' But the, spiritual paradigm is to be 'source oriented to see the source of the desire, the subject of the desire and not the object of the desire.'

Where does desire arise from? Watch the energy of desire, watch the vibration of the desire, watch the music of the desire... just watch it without identifying with it. Be a Sakshi, be a witness, then a miracle happens. This

experience cannot be taught; it has to be perceived. It is an experience when the experiencer dissolves into the experience.

Reflections



Chapter-3 **Man is Half-Awake and Half-Asleep**

During my workshop at San Francisco, a woman asked, 'Why does my husband constantly create hell for me? He is possessive of me, which makes both our lives miserable. I need to understand his psychology.'

All I said was, 'Just look around; we find the whole world is like a university of understanding. Each incident teaches us something very profound.'

We are in bondage and do not realize it. In order to come out of this, first we should realize that we are in bondage. Basically we live through half awake and half asleep state of consciousness.

The bondage may be due to any of the following:

- Insecurity
- Fear
- Possessiveness
- Greed
- Struggle for power

If we understand insecurity closely, we find that insecurity is not really a problem. In fact, our concept of security is the real problem. Insecurity is a form of change. Change Is God's mechanism of presenting us a surprise. If we see change in this light, then we will not be victims of change but will participate in change. Participating in change is participating in surprise. Our insecurity will disappear if we look at change as something to be experienced without our ignorant concept of security.

Another great bondage is that of Greed ... greed for money, name, fame People sacrifice happiness for the sake of money, name, fame.....Is this not foolish?

Reflect on this anecdote.

There was a belief in an empire that whoever becomes its emperor, would go to heaven and inscribe his name on a golden mountain. A man believing this

ideology, toiled throughout his life, sacrificed his happiness, and became the emperor.

When he died, he went to heaven. The gatekeeper at the doors of heaven was very indifferent. The emperor retorted, 'Don't you know that I am the emperor?'

The gatekeeper replied, 'Many emperors have come here from time immemorial. So what is so great about you?'

The emperor was shocked and asked him to lead him to the golden mountain.

The gatekeeper answered casually, 'Go straight, and turn right, you will find the way to the golden mountain.' The emperor reached the mountain and tried to inscribe his name on the golden mountain. He found the whole mountain filled with names; he was disappointed not to find space to inscribe his name. He came back and enquired gate keeper, 'Where can I find space to inscribe my name?' The gatekeeper casually replied, 'Wipe off one of the existing names and inscribe yours.'

In the infinity of time, where do we exist?

The greed for name and fame is a juvenile approach to life.

In the same workshop, her husband asked, 'When my wife gets angry, it is like the rage of a thousand flames. How do I deal with it?'

Can you see your expression very closely? It is a product of your imagination. One of the teachings of George Gurdjieff is.....There is an imaginary self in all of us. If one is not watchful, it creates its own world of reality. In a relationship we have to observe how our imaginary selves operate and learn to handle them with maturity.

When one is in a negative frame of mind, observe the following steps:

- Negativity is not in a given situation; it is more in us. For example when we say, 'Picnic is spoiled because of rain'... a negative feeling is generated---is it in rain or in us?
- Do not identify yourself with negative feelings. Feelings are like clouds which come and go fleetingly; but you are like the space. Do not identify with the clouds; but be centered in the space of consciousness. This process is called detachment. When you are attached to your negative feelings you become a prisoner to them. Attachment creates hell.

Reflect on this anecdote.

In the earlier days, there was an interesting technique for catching monkeys. A huge jar with a narrow neck was used. Nuts were dropped into a narrow necked jar, in the presence of a monkey. A monkey trying to grab the nuts from the jar got caught, because its fist clutching the nuts would get stuck in the narrow necked jar. Only if it dropped the

nuts, would its hand be free and easy to remove from the jar. But the monkeys were too attached to drop the nuts and free themselves; hence, they were caught.

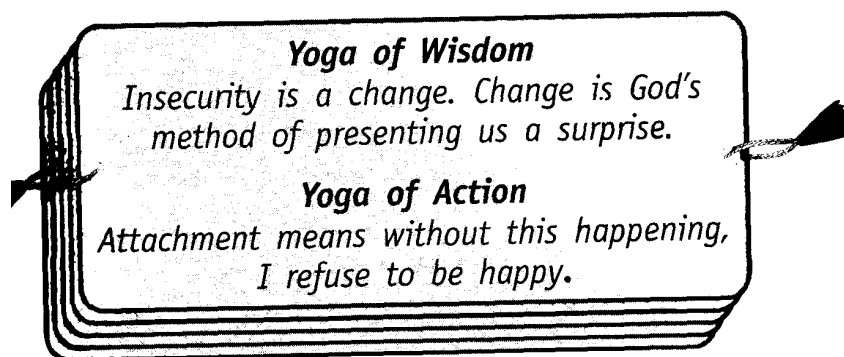
Are we also attached like this?

Can we experience a sense of wonderment when we see difficult people creating their own world of hell? The experience of wonderment relaxes one's being. First change has to happen within us, only then we can motivate others.

‘If you feel good, you will experience that the world is right.

But ignorant people feel that only if the world is right would they feel good.’

Reflections



Contemplation

Misfortune is a good teacher for the wise.

Let us change ourselves then the world will be an interesting game.

No news is good news for the unenlightened.

We unnecessarily mess things up in life due to our conditioning.

In the infinity of space & time where do we exist?

Man is a victim of his imaginary self.



Chapter-4

Just One More Day!

Vedas have described desires elaborately. There are two kinds of desires one is fundamental desire, the other topical desire. Topical desires arise in us more often than the fundamental desires. What are they?

We like to eat sweets, watch movies, gossip with friends...These are topical desires.

Now let us take a look at fundamental desires. Basically there are three desires under this category.

If we were to learn that today would be the last day in our lives, every one would expect 'Can we not live for a day more?' This is the first desire.

Let us digress a little. This was during my first talk on Bhagavad Gita in Madras. I was staying in a hotel. In the night, there was a knock on the door. A young girl had come to see me. Even before I could ask her what she wanted, she began to speak hastily.

'I left the home of my dominating mother-in-law today with a view to commit suicide. The seashore was too crowded. So I thought that if I commit suicide after one or two hours, no one would find me and save me. Just to spend a few hours, I attended your talk on Bhagavad Gita.

'I heard you saying, every one wishes to live for a day more. That is utter nonsense! I have no desire to live for the next moment. Right now, I am going straight to seashore to drown myself!' she said and began to walk away.

I am a Sanyasi ! Imagine this--a young girl meets me in the night, that too at my hotel room and then goes to commit suicide! What would you make of it?

I stopped her and said, 'I have only said the first half of what I planned to say today in the talk. Another half is yet to be told. So please wait till tomorrow evening and listen to the remaining talk.'

Next day, I continued my talk.

'Every one wishes to live a day more. This desire as per the Vedas is called 'Sat.' But we also wish that extra day should be spent happily---this is the second desire, called 'Ananda.' When one attains permanent bliss, no one would wish to die, including the lady I met yesterday, who wished to commit suicide!' It is a different matter that I never met the young girl after that!

The third fundamental desire is to gain as much knowledge as possible during one's lifetime. This is called hunger for knowledge.

Normally the idea meets with opposition, wherever I mention it! 'My son is only ten years old! He evinces absolutely no interest in his lessons but you say that everyone has a desire to gain knowledge! How is that?' is the question asked by some.

One may not have any interest in the lessons taught in the school, but that does not mean that one has no interest in gaining any kind of knowledge.

Just for fun, try telling this to someone 'This is an important secret. I will reveal it to you tomorrow!'-he would not be able to even wait till the next day to find

out what that secret is! We are not happy being ignorant. So I say, wishing to gain knowledge, wanting to learn new things, is third desire. This, the Vedas refer to as `Chit.'

Hence, 'Sat' means the desire to live, 'Ananda' means the desire that life should be happy, `Chit' the desire to acquire knowledge. The Vedas call them together as `Sat Chit Ananda.'

Sat, Chit and Ananda-are the three desires that we seek, a sea diver searching for pearls in the deep ocean holding his breath!

Not knowing this basic truth, we live our lives lost in the un-essentials.

Reflect on this story.

An Octroi officer was posted on a particular check post. He observed every day, a cyclist passing the check post carrying sandbags with him. This continued every day for years. There was no tax on sand and the Octroi officer allowed sand bags to pass.

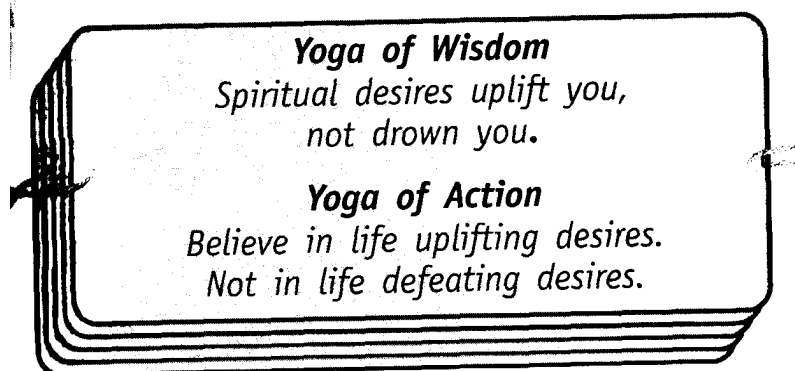
Only after retirement did the Octroi officer find a big cycle shop near the place he used to work. To his surprise, he came to know that the cyclist, who used to carry sand bags, was the owner of the shop. On enquiry, it came to light that the cyclist, all along smuggled one cycle a day under the pretext of carrying sand bags.....

The Octroi officer to his dismay found that during his tenure, he had only checked the sand bags... missing the essential.

So often, we get lost in the unessential and miss what is essential.

Therefore, the commitment of a spiritual person should be to fulfil the fundamental desire and not get lost in the unessential desires.

Reflections



Contemplation

In life beauty and wisdom is but a rare combination.

Life is not measured by the time span we live but by the quality built into it.

We get lost in the unessential and miss what is essential.



Chapter-5

The Missing Tenth Man!

Some of you may know the story of the Para Martha Guru and his disciples. This story is from our tradition. The disciples, standing near a river bank, were in deep sorrow. They were mourning the loss of one of their classmates, feeling that he had drowned.

A sage came along that way. He asked them as to why they were so sad. They told him, 'Ten of us came to the river to take bath. Now, we find that one of us is missing-he must have drowned.' The sage counted them and told them, 'All ten of you are alive. Why are you crying?'

One of the disciples said, 'Oh, no! Only nine of us are here. See, let me count in front of you...' and made others stand in a row and counted. The disciple started counting one, two.....nine. The Sage observed with a smile.

The disciple who counted asked, 'Oh! Sage! Where is the tenth person?'

The sage pointed to him and said, 'Tatvam Asi!' thou art that. 'You are the tenth.

He being the tenth man, missed counting himself. In the seeker, the sought was hidden.

Though some of us know this story, the philosophy behind it is not known to many.

We were discussing the desires of every human being. 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' are the desires. We spend our entire lifetime seeking these desires, day in and day out. Unfortunately, we seek them in cigarettes, liquor and other pleasures. We go about searching till our last breath.... 'Where is pleasure, where is happiness?'

The manager of a company recruited a pretty young girl as his personal secretary. The manager assumed that she liked him. He longed for that feeling to be true. One day, she invited him home for a dinner, citing an' occasion. The manager felt convinced that she was in love with him. With this firm belief, he went to her house for dinner.

When he went to her house, he found no one except the girl. A solitary candle was lit on the dining table. Now he was absolutely sure that she was really

enamored with him. They both sat down. The manager was excited that she was going to offer herself to him that night.

Now it was almost midnight. The young girl beckoned him to the next room. Assuming that it was her bedroom, the manager removed his coat and followed the girl. That room was in total darkness. He thought, 'Let me be ready before she switches on the lights..' and hurriedly removed all his . Just then the clock struck twelve ... the room was suddenly flooded with lights! It was filled with the office staff who, began to sing loudly, `Happy Birthday to you ...!'

The Manager stood before them in his full birthday suit, the personification of utter foolishness! The Manager, running behind his secretary, had totally forgotten his own birthday!

Similarly, many of us chase pleasures externally. We are a victim of our own assumptions. We assume happiness is in pleasures.

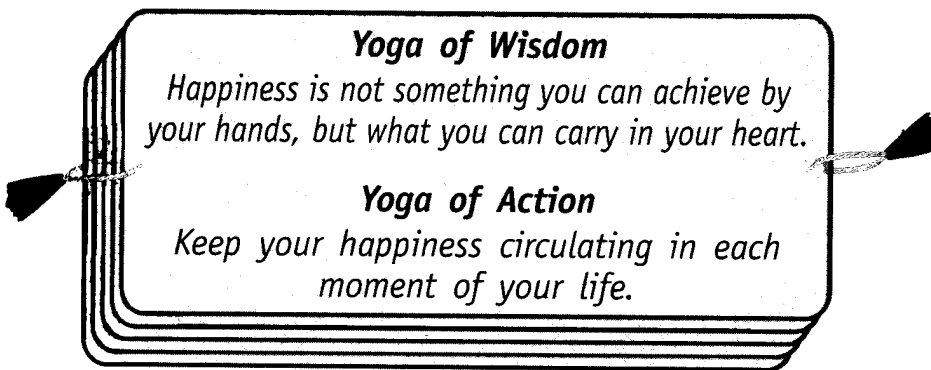
Like the disciple who was unaware that he himself was the person, we too live in ignorance.

One of the sayings of Bhagavad Gita is: 'The happiness you seek is within you.'

The sought is hidden in the seeker.

Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflections



Chapter-6
That was Conditional Love!

A young man who is working in a multinational bank at Hyderabad met me recently.

"Swamiji! I am a Hindu. I loved and married a girl belonging to a different religion. We have a beautiful baby girl. Prior to our marriage and even now, religion has never been an issue between us. But of late I have begun to feel that if my wife adorned her forehead with a red tilak, she would look pretty. I expressed my wish to her. But she said, 'Don't try to thrust your religion on me!' Swamiji, honestly, I do not consider putting a tilak in any way related to religion. Almost every day we argue on this matter. With each passing day the discussion turns more serious and hostile.

Yesterday, I lost my temper and said, 'Don't I know about your family?' She at once cut her finger with a knife and placed oozing blood on her forehead and asked, 'Now are you satisfied?' out of great ego and fury. I have brought my wife with me. Please advise her," he concluded.

I told both of them, 'From what you state, one thing is pretty clear to me. You both love each other.

What is the genesis of your love?'

I told him, 'Since the day you fell in love with your wife, she has totally accepted whatever you told her. That is why you loved her. A love that survives because someone agrees with you is not real love ... it is conditional love. Now with regard to the tilak, your wife has not agreed to your condition. So, the love between both of you has vanished.

'Now, let us view your love from another angle. All along, you thought she would accept everything you say without questioning. Your wife also did nothing so far to change that opinion. So, it is very clear that you love your opinion more than you love your wife.

'Life is like a musical instrument. Tradition and relationship are the two aspects of life. If you keep tradition aside for a while and focus on enhancing a relationship, the music that emanates from life would be wonderful!' was my advice.

I trust that the couple would not have clashed with each other on the issue of tilak!

Recently, another man came to me. 'Swamiji! My girlfriend cheated me!' he said and narrated the whole incident.

'Your girlfriend did not cheat you. You believed that she would love you forever. The moment your business failed, she ditched you. Just ponder. It is not the girl friend who cheated you, but it is the belief you formed of her,' was my reply.

Well, what is the way for a husband and wife to live without quarrels and squabbles in other words, in perfect understanding of each other?

The requirement is Unconditional Love.

Whether one wears a tilak or not; goes to work or not; cooks tasty food or not; a husband must love his wife unconditionally. The wife too must shower love on her husband, unconditionally.

Second, never look at what is not in your husband or wife; he or she may not have many attributes ... if there is love and concern for others that is fine. Be happy about it! Only can you taste the nectar of family life....So make your family life fragrant like a flower - fresh and juicy!

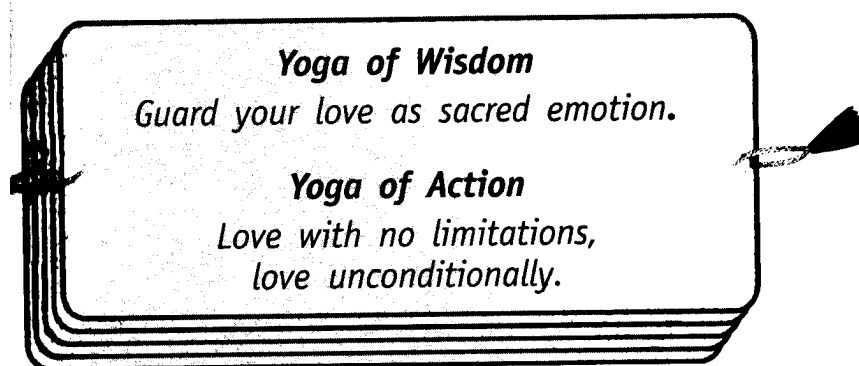
Let me tell you another important aspect.

Negative feelings like anger, self-pity, and guilt.... reside in our nervous systems. At any given opportunity, these feelings vent out with great force without our awareness. These known as "Energy Clots." Just like a bomb that bursts a flame touches its wick; these clots break up like an earthquake, with the use of certain sensitive words. They can even burn the relationship of love and understanding that is as cool as ice! So, please avoid using words that Id make your spouse burst.

When a child begins to walk, he can be quite unsteady. At times, he would fall. When he fails, if the parents are not nearby, he would just pick himself up and walk on. On the other hand, if he fails in the presence of his parents, he would wail loud enough to gather the whole neighbourhood! Thus, his racket is to seek attention. Sometimes even grown-ups have this characteristic!

Every husband or wife craves for attention from the other. So be sensitive to this reality and handle such situations with maturity by giving meaningful attention. If one fails doing this, their mental games while seeking attention manipulatively would go on.

Reflections



Contemplation

The Sought is hidden in the seeker

Man is a victim of his own projection.

A Living rat is better than a dead lion.

A day of unhappiness appears longer than a month of happiness

Under sharp thorns grow the roses.



If one were to list the reasons for quarrels among couples, it is not money mindedness that would top the list! The Words! Words that dissolve into thin air the moment they are uttered are the main reason for causing bitterness in a relationship between a husband and wife. Just a few words have dragged some couples to courts! Mere words have made many couples to live like strangers within the same household.

Here is a brief tale!

A husband never bothered about the likes and dislikes of his wife. The wife's reciprocal attitude perfectly suited her husband. One night, the husband had not returned home till midnight. The wife, not worried about him, had long since retired to bed. In the middle of the night, there was a knock at the door. The wife opened the door. It was her husband. He had brought a monkey along with him. As soon as she saw the monkey, the wife was furious. However, she swallowed her anger and went to bed. He placed the monkey on the bed between him and his wife.

Now she could contain her anger no more!

'How can you let a monkey sleep by my side? How can I bear this nuisance and nasty smell?'

'Of course! Haven't I got used to your foul smell ever since I married you? So, soon this monkey too would get used to it!' said the husband. These pricking words hurt the wife no end. On the same night, their marital life came to an end!

Here, we have to recall the words of Dalai Lama.

`If the reason for your being born on the earth should be fulfilled, please help others. In case you are not able to help others, at least try not to hurt anyone!'

gut, what happens in some houses? Husband and wife tear each other apart with their words. It seems strange even to think of it! As the levels of knowledge, skills and abilities of human beings rise higher, the rates of divorce also increases!

What is the reason for this? The answer for this question lies in the meaning of the word `knowledge.'

Well then, what is knowledge? Knowledge does not reside in books. It is visible in the behavior of people.

In business management schools emphasis is laid on a subject Interpersonal skills! This subject teaches us how to develop good and healthy relationships with co-workers, superiors, subordinates and clients.

Recently, a reputed University in USA conducted a survey to analyze what are the characteristics of persons who rise quickly in their professional life.

Do you know the result of this survey?

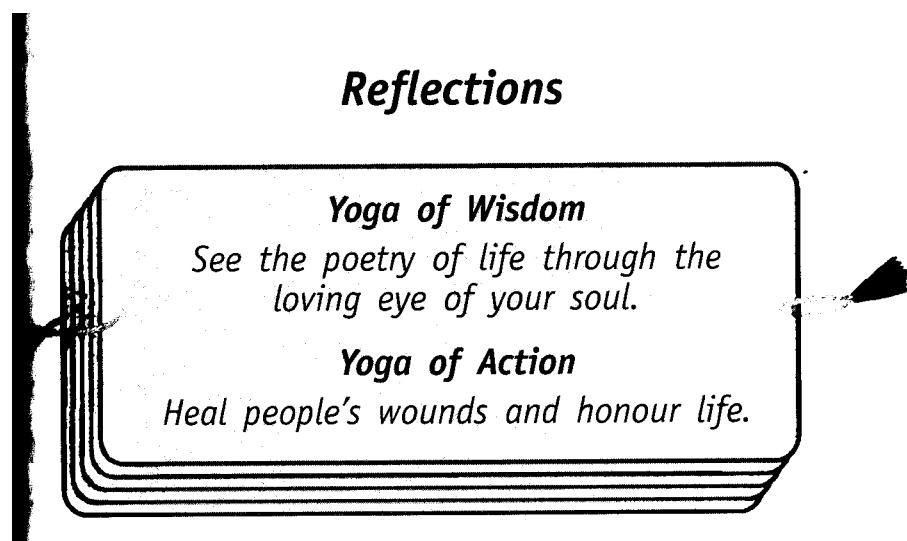
For a person to succeed in his profession, 35 per cent subject knowledge is sufficient. But, what is important is, 65 per cent knowledge about interpersonal skills! That is to say, only a person, who knows to strengthen relationships, can surpass any barriers to growth and come up in his profession. If the skills for strengthening relationships are necessary at the workplace where one works for monetary returns, then can you imagine how important they are at home too?

Even if a person has made a mistake, do not tell him, 'What you have done is wrong.' On the contrary, help him see what is right rather than make him feel wrong. Even if you have to criticize someone apply the sandwich technique.... place your criticism between praises. There are many communication skills like disarming, pre-emptive strikes, multiple closes, emptying technique For example, you Can instantly build a rapport with the other by

- applying warm up technique by asking questions which impress the other
- using "Me too' technique to be one with the speaker's interest
- avoiding 'I and Me' and using 'You' more often

These are the primary lessons in Interpersonal skills. These are suitable not only for the working environment, but also in intimate relationships.

Today, in many houses, the relationship between a husband and wife is like a stone. But the strange fact is, even stone carvings in places like Khajuraho are full of life and romantic splendour! This was the vision of our Rishis Sages of India.



Contemplation

Harsh words are sure poison that spoils life.

People's skills are sure highways to success.

Chapter-8

THE MANTRA FOR MENTAL JOY!

We have witnessed in our times some issues like the Kashmir problem, Sri Lankan problem, Palestinian problem persisting for years. Relationship problems between a husband and wife are in no way different from these.

There was a big industrialist, who thought only about business; even at home. He had a very talkative wife.

Initially, he tolerated the constant nagging of his wife, but as the business grew, he became impatient with her. So in order to a solution, he approached a saint.

The wife came to know of this. She was furious and immediately confronted him.

'I heard that you went to a saint to discuss about me? What t advice did he give you?' she asked.

Sorry! He has asked me not to reveal it to you,' said the Husband.

Oh! So, that saint is more important to you than me? Tell me the truth at once! What is the great advice he has given you which you feel I should not know?'

'He taught me a mantra. But he has told me not to tell you,' replied the husband calmly.

'I am asking you for the last time. Tell me what mantra he taught you. If you don't tell me, right now, I shall pack my bags and go away to my mother's house,' screamed the wife erupting like a volcano!

'Sorry you have to forgive me. The saint has ordered me never to reveal the mantra... that too, to you.'

'So, matters have come to such an extent, is it? I am going to my mother's house immediately,' said the wife. She packed her bags and started to leave. Now the husband was jumping with joy!

'Success! Success! The mantra worked! He shouted gleefully.

For almost a week, he was blissfully at peace, free from his nagging wife. But after that, he felt as if the whole house was empty and silent. He began to feel terribly lonely, and almost became half mad because he missed his wife a lot! Now, that is a totally different story!

....The truth revealed by the above anecdote is however very simple.

Many husbands in our country expect their wives to be possessive about them. They long to be tied down by love; but at the same time, they also want to be free. Both are however not possible at the same time! A wife who wishes to control her husband with love would surely be a stumbling block to his freedom.

Long ago, I was travelling with one of my students on a bike in Bangalore. It was night time. At a turning, all of a sudden there was a car without headlights plying on the wrong side of the road. My student was quick enough to the bike away and we had a narrow escape. But the indicator lamps of the bike were damaged in this encounter.

The driver of the car who had come on the wrong side simply drove away, as if nothing had happened. My student could not control his anger. `Shall we give a chase to that and stop him? Or shall we inform the police?' he was seriously thinking on those lines.

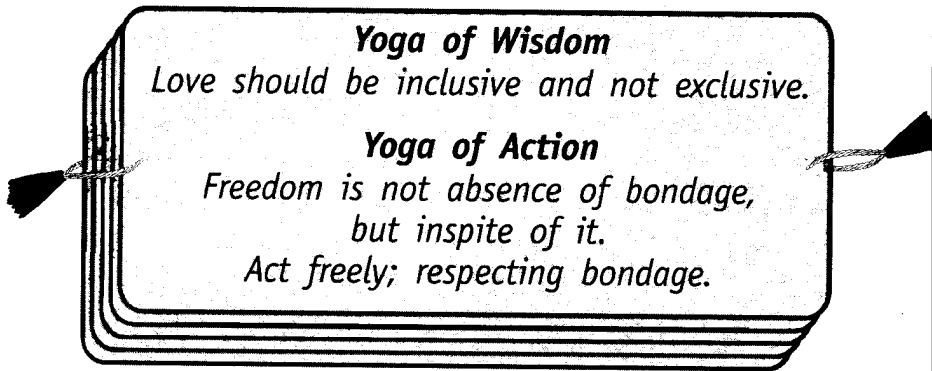
Finally when I managed to calm him down, I discovered a truth. My student was not angry at the damage to his bike or the possibility of an accident. He was angry because the driver had left without even uttering one word of apology. That hurt him the most.

Do you know when a person gets hurt the most? It may be through insult or harsh words. It is when someone considers the other less valuable than any material possession; then the person gets deeply wounded. So, being indifferent to another is the greatest insult one can inflict.

Husbands, please be aware!

On how many occasions have you been indifferent towards your wife?

Reflections



Chapter-9

**GIVE AND
YOU SHALL RECEIVE!**

Majority of the marital conflicts spring from the indifference of a husband towards his wife. Here is an example.

There was a college professor.

Once, while he was taking an evening class, there was a phone call. It was his wife, who spoke out of irritation and frustration.

'Have you totally forgotten that you have a 'wife' at home? Did you at least see this evening's newspaper? The news is, I am dead!'

What the wife wished to convey was that he was not even bothered whether she was alive or dead. But he was unable to understand the tinge of sadness in question. He only thought that he had to somehow respond to her call. So he said, 'Is it so? Are you dead? Where are you speaking from ... hell or heaven?'

The fiction apart, consider what happens in reality. What happens in many houses?

'After all she is my wife. She will listen to whatever I say and do what I bid her to do,' such is the mentality of many husbands. In reality no husband should take his wife for granted. A wife is also a human being ... she too has her expectations from life.

Does it not mean that the husband must live as per the expectations of his wife, totally? At least, in such matters as related to the family, he should consider her opinion.

There is a popular song Family life is like the electric current. It is absolutely true! How?

A young man John, came to the city in search of a job. He could not afford to stay in a room by his own means. So he stayed with a friend who was in the hostel of an Engineering College; where many electrical appliances like fan, radio, TV, etc., were lying around dismantled.

John, who hailed from a village did not understand any of these. So when he touched something, he got an electric shock. When his friend returned from the college, John narrated what had happened to him. His friend began to teach John about the appliances during his free time. After that, John became so interested in electrical items that he began to learn more about them. Having learnt about the appliances, none of them could give him a shock anymore!

'Which connections make the radio work; how to avoid unwanted static noises, etc.' were quickly learnt by John. Then the very appliances held wonderful surprises for him!

Dear husbands! Your wife is, in some ways like an electrical appliance. If you can understand her and behave accordingly, then the most wonderful symphony of music will flow; if not, be assured that there will be a shock.

If you wish your wife to shower her love on you, then there is only one way-you should shower your love on her.

'No, no, Swamiji! You don't know my wife. If she shouts, you can hear it four houses away. When she begins to fight, the whole house turns upside down. How can I shower love on her?' This is a question that many ask.

Now just look at this example.

In the earlier days, when cigarettes were first manufactured and sold on a commercial basis

'Who on earth would buy this nasty stuff? It stinks and makes one feel like throwing up. The ash that falls down litters the floor. This product can never be sold. Decent, cultured people would never use this.' Such were the comments that surfaced when the product came out initially. Many industrialists refused to consider the possibility of producing cigarettes on a large scale. But those who had plans to produce cigarettes did not get disheartened.

'Cigarette smoking is the sign of manliness,' 'Cigarette is something that is in the hands of men who succeed,' 'Used by young men who act fast' were a few advertisement slogans unleashed by the manufacturers. They thought that this would change the public opinion, induce people to buy and smoke cigarettes! So they went ahead and advertised their product. As they expected, people gave up thinking of the bad smell, injury to health, littering and began smoking in style. Today, many cannot stay away from cigarettes even for half an hour!

Haven't the cigarette manufacturers changed people to such an extent where smokers have become their slaves? Is this not pitiable?

So, in order that we either like or dislike something, conditioning of the mind is very crucial. It is in this context we discussed about cigarettes.

In case you have an opinion about your spouse that he or she is bad, it is perfectly alright. By conditioning your mind, you can really love your spouse! Do not tell me that you do not even have that much control over your mind as exercised so successfully by the cigarette manufacturers!

Never consider that your spouse is a person without love. This need not be true. If your love spontaneously springs and flows like a river, surely, your spouse would drown in it and reciprocate in manifold ways. If it does not, lovingly accept it.

Reflections

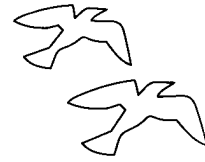
Yoga of Wisdom

*Power of love is God.
Love for power is Ego.*

Yoga of Action

*The Art of living is the Art of Growing. Growing
is the thermometer of your commitment.*

Contemplation



A leopard cannot change it's spots.

A rat remains rat though dressed in a suit.

Many doors open when one has patience.

Where are you speaking from ... hell or heaven?

World is like an electrical room. Learn to use it wisely.

*Wisdom is the least burdensome traveling kit,
it infuses sunlight in the soul.*



Chapter 10 THE WORLD IS WATCHING US!

Swamiji, you advise that I should love my wife and in turn she would and in return she would certainly love me. I really love my wife deeply. But she does not heed anything that I say... this is an on-going insult. How can I continue to show love to my insulting wife?' ask many.

This confusion arises only when you view her as your wife. Take your children for instance! Do they listen to everything you say and follow your guidelines perfectly? Not at all! But, does that mean, your children do not love or respect you? Similarly, we may like or love someone it however does not mean that he or she should completely follow and obey what we say. is an incident from the West.

A couple were celebrating their silver jubilee wedding anniversary. Twenty five long years had passed since they got married. After the grand celebration, returned home to spend a very intimate night together.

In that country, to stay married for twenty five years, without complications such as divorce, legal suit..., is a great achievement.

That night, the husband asked his wife, 'My darling! Even after so many years of married life together, you have still not allowed me near your cupboard. Can I see what is in it?'

'Oh, yes!' said the wife, opening the cupboard. Inside there were lot of clothes, ornaments and also bundles of currency notes; next to it, there were two eggs.

On seeing this, the husband was really very proud of his wife. 'I thought she was a spendthrift! But she has saved so much money!' he reflected, with pride.

He asked her, 'Darling! Everything is fine ... but why are you keeping the eggs in the cupboard?'

The wife's face changed. After a while she explained, 'I am telling you this with the hope that you would understand and forgive me. Whenever I lose myself to another man. I buy an egg and place it in the cupboard as a memento.'

Her husband however, was not angry. He looked at the cupboard again. There were just two eggs! He hugged her close with tears of joy in his eyes and said, 'In our twenty-five years of married life, you have erred only twice! You are really great!'

She replied, 'Before I could complete, you showered me with all kinds of praise! Just listen patiently ... every time the number of eggs reached a dozen, I sold them and kept the cash by the side!'

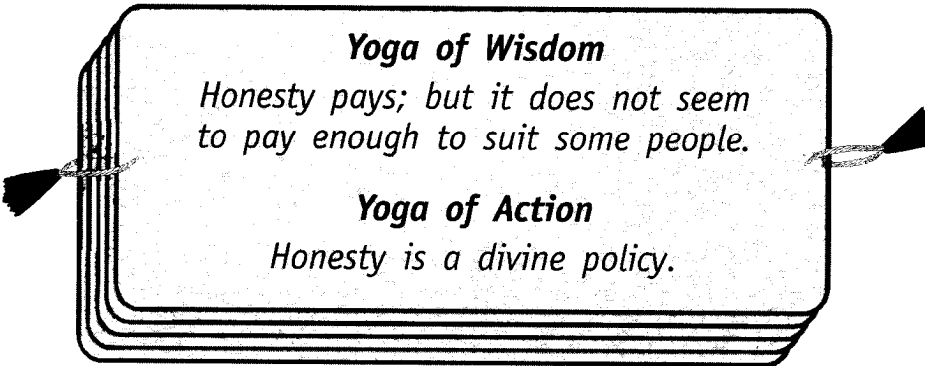
When he looked into the cupboard again and noticed the currency bundles, his blood pressure shot up with rage and he divorced her that very instant.

Why am I narrating this incident?

Our love comes from ego. Love from ego is always conditional and it is self-love. Self-love is never fulfilling. If we can learn to operate from unconditional love, such love is very fulfilling.

Every moment, teach yourself to operate from unconditional love.

Reflections



Chapter-11

THE UN-FILLABLE BOWL

Here is a popular story about greed from Sufi literature.

The king was going around town. A beggar came by and asked for aims. The king asked him to go away saying, 'Please do not disturb my peace of mind!' and the beggar laughed heartily. Then he explained, 'Oh, King! If your peace of mind is in pieces, then it is no peace at all!'

The king then realized that the beggar was really not a beggar but a sage. At once he bowed to him and said, 'Oh, Sage! Please ask what you want and I shall give you!'

The sage laughed again, 'Do not promise something that cannot give.'

At this, the king was annoyed. He stopped his round abruptly and took the sage to his palace. The sage showed the begging bowl and said, 'Alright. Fill this bowl with gold coins.'

The king smiled and beckoned for gold. His attendant brought a plateful of gold coins. As the king put them into bowl, the bowl seemed to swallow them up. Even after pouring all the gold coins from the treasury of the kingdom, the bowl was not full. Finally, the king was humbled and fell at the feet of the sage.

At that time, the sage said, 'Oh, King! This begging bowl cannot be filled by anyone. Not just you; even the richest of the rich cannot fill this. This is not an ordinary begging bowl. This is the skull of a man who had lived and died with a lot of greed.'

Stop your frustration; do not look at your neighbor with envy. Start to live by fulfilling your needs well within your means. More than half the quarrels in your family would disappear! You too can climb the peak of happiness!

On no count should you permit relatives, friends and others to induce or tempt your family with greed. Greed is something that we should be wary of, in all walks of life.

There is a funny story about greed.

There was this man who could be called the personification of greed. He opined that the woman he would like to marry need not have to be beautiful, knowledgeable, good natured..., but only had to possess money. The locals, who knew of his nature, were not willing to let him marry any girl from amongst them. So he went to different places looking for a bride.

In a distant town, he met a rich man. He got a proposal to marry one of the rich man's daughters. The rich man said, 'I have a daughter who is twenty years old. If you marry her, I shall give you half a million dollars as dowry. I have another

daughter who is twenty five years old and if you marry her, the dowry shall be one million dollars. There is a third daughter who is thirty years old and the dowry for her is two million dollars.'

As the rich man increased the age of the bride, the dowry amount went up correspondingly and he became very excited. He asked, 'Do you have any daughter who is fifty years old and still unmarried?'

Money, wealth and property are mere tools. Money is not happiness. If the meaning of money is happiness, then all who have plenty of money should really be happy. But in real life it is not so! Well, how to get happiness? It is Buried deep inside in the meaning we give to money, position and life....

To explain this, here is another story.

On the Bombay Juhu beach, an ascetic was relaxing by stretching himself out. A passer-by noticed and asked;

'While everyone else is rushing around and working, are you lying down doing nothing?'

What is the use of working?

If you work you would get money...'

And if I get money ... ?'

You get all the comforts of life..

If I get all the comforts ... ?'

'You can relax and remain idle!

And the ascetic replied with a smile, 'Well, right now, I am doing the same thing.'

Many misinterpret this story. It is not meant to encourage people to be idle. The moral of the story is, happiness and peace of mind are not in money and comforts! Happiness is in our outlook and approach to the very life itself.

Reflections

Yoga of Wisdom

There is sufficiency in the world for man's need; not for his greed... M.K. Gandhi

Yoga of Action

Invite trouble, it will usually accept your invitation. Invite contentment, it will contain you with joy.

Contemplation



A cold lover is a faithless friend.

Peace of mind is broken to pieces.

Greed is a punishment to the soul.



Chapter-12

DROP THE SCISSORS..... PICK THE NEEDLE

When we observe riots, wars, and battles that take place in the name of religion, it makes us to ask, do we need something called religion at all?

Many raise this question with pain, concern and an element of doubt.

'All destructive arsenal such as nuclear bomb, hydrogen bomb, biological warfare, are the result of scientific developments!' Aren't they?

Diseases are many because doctors are plenty.

Like the manifestation of truth in the above statements, there is also truth in the practice of religion.

The house is in darkness. Out of anger, if one enters it, one bound to tumble on various items of furniture. Getting annoyed, throwing the furniture out of the house ... are not solutions. The reason for the fall is not the furniture, but darkness. So what has to be thrown out is not the furniture. Once we light the lamp, darkness will disappear and so too will the problems.

Religion was never created to cause riots and confusion. It was created to provide peace. Religion was not meant to divide human beings. It was created to unite human beings!

In Sufi literature, there is a story.

There was a noble tailor, who had transformed himself into a great sage. The King came to pay his obeisance. The king gifted him golden scissors, encrusted with diamonds. But the sage refused to accept it.

The king was worried that he was not able to help the sage. So he asked him, 'What can I give you that would be of use to you?'

The sage replied, 'Give me a needle!'

The king at once arranged for a needle and presented it to the sage. Humbly, he waited for the sage's response. The sage said, 'The reason why I refused your gift of scissors is because it cuts and divides. Our minds are like scissors that cut and divide. But the needle would stitch, it would join and unite! Our hearts are like needles which join and unite.'

Today, humanity is in need of a needle and not scissors!

Times may have passed; but the relevance of the sages message is valid even today. True religious leaders would not speak in a way that would divide human beings. Those who speak in such manner cannot be the leaders of religion. But unfortunately, it is not so....

At this juncture, I make a mention of an incident that took place in the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

It was as during the partition of India. Hindus and Muslims killing each other in Bengal. It was a horrifying sight see blood flowing like a stream on the streets.

A middle aged man came and fell at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi and began to cry. 'I am a sinner. I have killed many my own hands. I will surely go to hell!' he sobbed, uncontrollably.

What happened was; this man's son was cut into pieces in religious riot. He was so enraged. With revenge on his mind, he set out to destroy many of the other religion. He killed many in the process, out of sheer rage and hatred. After a youth of his own community fell down and died in his presence did he realize the magnitude of his sinful deed. Filled with a tremendous sense of guilt, he fell at the of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji lifted him from the ground and said, 'Nothing is lost as yet! There is still one chance for you to atone and go to heaven!'

'What? Can I really go to heaven?' asked the man, with a disturbed mind. Gandhiji looked into his eyes and said compassionately, 'Do adopt an orphaned child from the unity you hate. Treat him as your own. Bring him up, educate

him and develop him into a great person. This is the way to make amends for your sin, the way for you to heaven!'

We must understand something profound from this incident. We should not misunderstand what Gandhiji meant. By killing many people of a particular community we hate, then adopting an orphaned child of that community, we will not absolved of the cruelty inflicted on humanity. There can no pardon for taking someone's life intentionally.

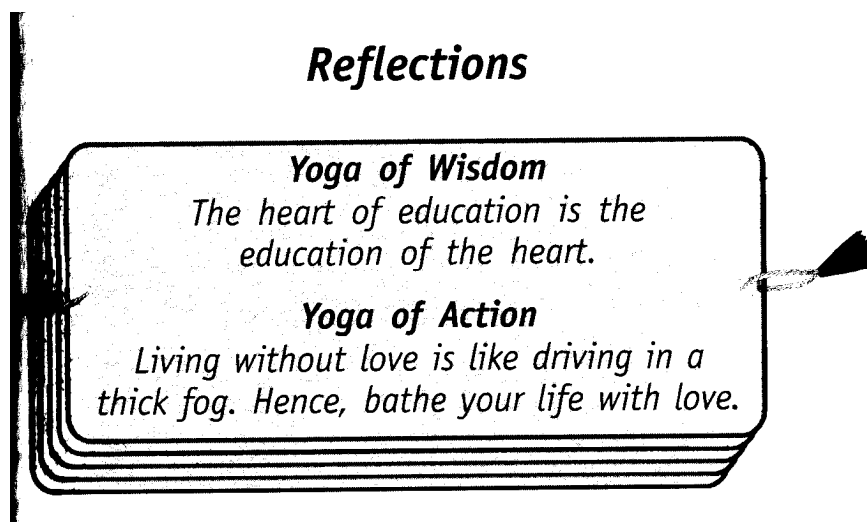
On the other hand, if a person sincerely regrets his gory acts and reforms himself, he would surely accept the other religion with love. He may even practice that religion.

All religions say this loud and clear: one must love and respect others. This message is found in Gita, Koran, Bible, and all scriptures from the various religions of the world. Only the wordings are different.

The little that we can do is to take an oath :

'Whichever religion one belongs to, one shall love and respect all human beings,'

Then, there would be no chaos and conflict, not only on the basis of religion, but also on caste, creed, race



Contemplation



Ignorant thinking is the devils fishing hook.

Unwise thinking cuts and divides. A loving heart joins and unites.

Crooked iron can be straightened with a hammer.

Forgiveness makes the heart grow fonder.



Chapter-13

BACK TO THE SOURCE!

Does God exist?

There can be no other doubt as ancient or prehistoric as this!

Let us see an incident from the life of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He was an enlightened master. Many people from all over the country flocked to visit him at Kolkatta. There was a famous Pandit during his time. This Pandit was a very learned person. He was an expert in many forms of learning, but he had no faith in God. The Pandit was very jealous of Paramahansa's popularity.

He wanted to have a debate with Ramakrishna Paramahansa to show his expertise and prove to him that there was no God. The Pandit argued well, citing a number of points, incidents and examples to put forth his argument with great skill and expertise. All the disciples of Ramakrishna Paramahansa were listening with rapt attention. The disciples feared the possibility of non-existence God being proved! Such was the eloquence of the Pandit's convincing skills.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa listened compassionately.

Finally he smiled and said, 'Excellent! Wonderful! Your point of view was fantastic! You spoke with great skill. In every single word you uttered, I could see God's radiance dancing ... My heartfelt thanks to you for showing me God in and through your logic!'

The Pandit was dumbfounded.

The Vedas describe God as one without a beginning and an end. What is it that is without a beginning or an end? The very Existence! In that way, existence is God.

Let us read a Zen story.

A village was starved of rain for many seasons. The fields were parched, the wells had dried. At that stage, a Zen monk came to the village. People described their pathetic condition with tears in their eyes. The monk decided to relieve them of their sufferings. He requested for a place in the centre of the village to meditate. During the course of his meditation, the rain God was pleased and showered the village with heavy rain. The villagers drenched in joy. They gathered around the monk with tears of gratitude and exclaimed, 'How did you manage to do this?'

The monk replied, 'As I meditated, a sense of peace dawned in ~ my mind and harmony set in my body. The atmosphere around me was in tune with harmony. The harmony created a difference externally; thereby enabling transformation of the season of no rain. So, it rained. If you are in harmony, nature will be in harmony with you.'

If there is peace of mind within, the same would spread outwardly also. So is it with nature. If one does not cheat nature would not betray mankind. This was the philosophy proved by the Zen monk!

This is not magic or mumbo jumbo! One should accept it as a scientific truth. Nature consists of so many wonders that are beyond our comprehension.

The Vedas call this 'Maya.' This can be explained through an interesting story.

There was a farmer. He died of an illness. He had three sons. After completing the funeral rites of the father, the sons set out to check his Will and testament. His Will read like this--

‘ One half of my property should go to my first son; one third should go to my second son and one ninth should go to my third son.'

After reading this, the three sons gave up in total confusion. Because the farmer had left behind 17 elephants and nothing more! How could seventeen elephants be divided into half, or one third, or one ninth!?

As they were grappling with the problem, a sage came by and offered to help them. He read the Will carefully and smiled. He made the elephants stand in a row and told them,

‘There is one elephant in my ashram. Please go, bring it and make it stand alongside the other elephants left behind by father. The total number would then be eighteen. Let eldest son take one half of the total number elephants- that is, nine.’ The eldest son got nine elephants.

Next he called the second son and gave him six elephants, being one third of his share, and to the third son, two elephants being one ninth of his share, as mentioned in the will.

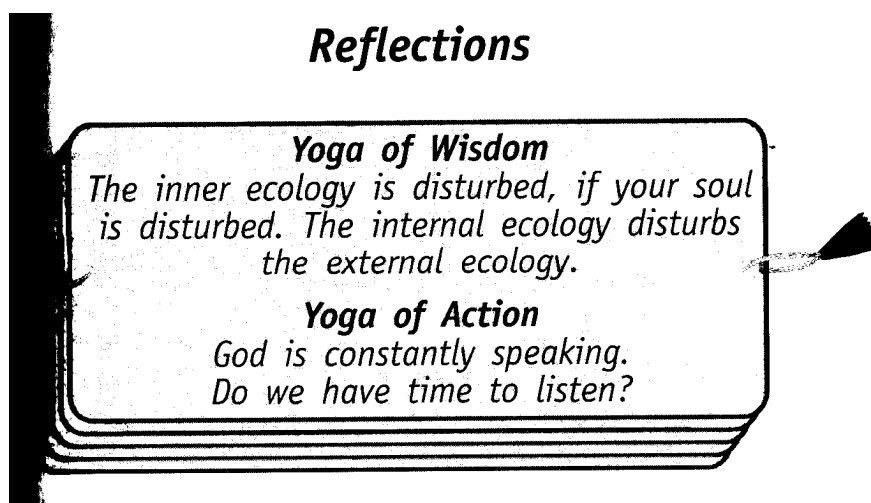
Then he told them, 'My children! Now as per your father's Will, I have divided the elephants among you. Now all three of you together have seventeen elephants. One elephant remains, which is mine which was just added for calculation purposes. So now I will take back my elephant!'

Yet another story from Vedic culture explains the philosophy of Maya. It is very important to understand the way Maya engulfs us.

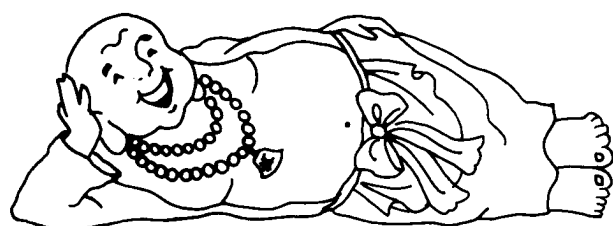
A master was teaching his disciple under a lamp. The flame disappeared due to heavy wind. Now the disciple asked the master, 'Guruji! Where has the flame gone?'

'It has gone back to wherever it came from!' said the master.

So, instead of focusing on endless debate as to whether God exists or not, we must realise the divine potential within us. Let us focus on strengthening this potential. There is no stronger divine power than this!



Contemplation:



Heart has its own logic that the head cannot understand.

Be in harmony with life and nature will bless you thousand folds.

An unwise man fights his own shadow.



Chapter-14 !

THE FUTURE!

Why do some people suffer from the pain of sorrow?

If we were to list out the reasons, they would be endless. If you ask people, most would say because of the fear of the future. This is only partly true. If you ask me, one of the main reasons for misery is the burden of the past memories.

Let us think about the future a little later.

First, let us take a look at the past. The past is also known as the 'dead past.'

But in the heart of our hearts, we do not allow the past to die. Even though we do not want it, we still carry it unnecessarily in our hearts and struggle with it.

There was a very proud village head. He would bow his head only in front of one person-that was the barber. One day, while having a haircut, the barber asked, 'Is it true that the owner of the neighboring fields stopped water to your crops? Have the crops wilted?'

'Don't remind me of that!' roared the man, in a fierce rage.

'All right! Forget that. Have you had any news about your wife who ran away two years ago?'

'Don't talk! Just shut up and mind your business!' warned the village head.

Finally, when the haircut was over, the barber said,

'Sir, please forgive me for being impertinent. When I talked about unpleasant events of your life, you got angry. Your hair arose and stood firm. It made my job easy. I wanted to give you a good haircut. That is why I reminded you of your past! However, what I did was wrong; please forgive me!'

So, if we recall misfortunes and difficulties that we faced in the past, our blood boils. Our heart becomes heavy and we feel dejected.

The anxiety and the fear of the future is the next stage. What will happen tomorrow? What will happen to the business? These very thoughts of uncertainty of future bring fear.

There is a way to live life without worrying about the past and being anxious of the future. If you ask someone they boastfully quote from the Gita: - "Do your duty, do not expect results.' Many do not understand the deeper meaning in this saying.

Result is related to the future. Duty is related to the present. If one worries about the future, the present work would be imbalanced. That is why it is said, we must not worry about results.

If we were asked to walk along a narrow and long pair of rails, we would call it a very simple task. All of us would easily do that. But, if the same rail is suspended between tall buildings, and if we were asked to walk, there would be hesitation. 'Oh! no handrails for support... the height is staggering... limbs tremble in fear .. head spins ... the reason?' The fear of ... slipping, failing, breaking of head and may be loss of lifeare the thoughts that come to our minds!

While we tremble from the fear of the future, we must remember that the present is being wasted. Just as we take holy water in a temple in cupped hands, look at it with reverence, taste it lovingly, and feel divine; we must enjoy the present moment with relish. If we are submerged in the fear of the future, we would miss many pleasant moments including seeing the beauty of our spouse and children! The tongue loses the taste of delicious food. We would live our life like a mechanical robot.

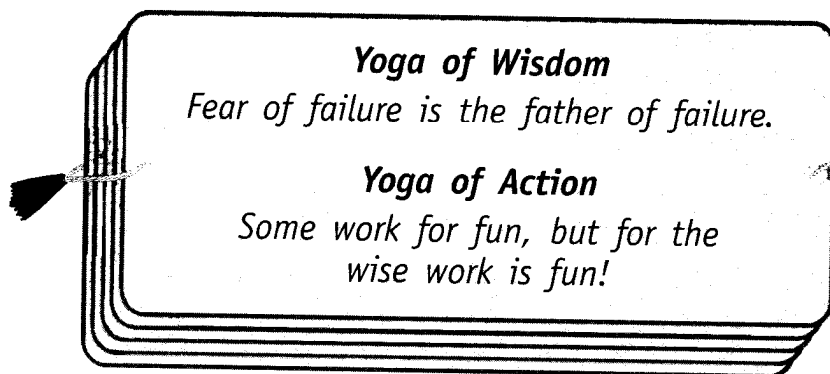
Does this mean that one should not plan for the future? No. Please plan your future. Plan Well. But do not worry constantly about it and thus live in fear.

Plan for the future. Learn from the past. Enjoy the present.

The past might have been filled with sadness and the future may be uncertain. We do not know. Our present moment is the only gift given to us by God. To put it briefly ---

Past is History
Future is Mystery
Present is a Gift
That's why we call it as PRESENT!

Reflections



Chapter-15

I AM GOING TO WIN THE COMPETITION!

I had an opportunity to interact with the readers of a famous Tamil Magazine.

It was a two-day program. At the end of the program, a young man asked me.

'Swamiji! I am a postgraduate. It is more than ten years since I completed my studies. So far, I have not received even a single interview card from the employment exchange. So, I am working as a cashier in a restaurant. This job has no connection whatsoever with my educational qualifications. Last month, there was a shortage of cash at the counter. I do not know it happened. The shame of being accused loomed large my mind. I thought I could pawn one of my wife's jewelry and replace the missing amount. But my wife refused. I asked my mother. She only fired me, but did nothing to help me! In this world, my own mother and wife were not ready to save my honor!'

I told him, 'Leave alone the fact that your mother and wife not trust you. Do you trust yourself? Think deeply! You lack the confidence to take risks in life. So, you are stuck a job that you dislike. Since you dislike your job, you are unable to do it with full involvement. Because of this, you are not able to remember how that money was missing! So, your problem is not your wife or mother. It is you, yourself! Lack of self-confidence is your problem. First try to overcome it.'

Reflect on this.

A person from New York visited my ashram and asked, 'Swamiji, I am so depressed because my wife left me the moment I reached USA. Now I am divorced. I am 29 years and feel my whole life is wasted.'

When asked for the reason, he said, 'Who will marry me, as I am already 29 years old?'

I told him, 'Even cockroaches have multiple partners in life. Are you less than a cockroach to feel that you cannot get another woman in your life?'

Just see how poor was his self-esteem. It is a fact that his wife had left him. Poor self-confidence is the sickness which is killing his life. But he has to develop self-confidence so as to get a partner, as he is still 29 years young.

In order to foster growth of self-confidence, three qualities are absolutely essential.

Firstly, we should never give into worries, sadness and self-pity. Instead learn to feel good and build self-esteem.

Secondly, we should learn new skills. If we do not acquire new skills, we cannot develop self-confidence!

What I mean by skill is, expertise in some field, which is of interest to us. It could be carpentry, gardening, painting, cooking, plumbing.... Select any field, learn it and train yourself in it!

Finally, the ability to take on responsibility and be accountable.

You, would have seen some employees in Government Service. When you ask them a question, they will never give a definite answer of 'Yes' or 'No.' Their replies are either vague or incomplete. If an issue is to be resolved, they will listen to the whole narration, only to say at the end, 'Well, why don't you go directly to the higher official and tell everything?' This behavior is dubbed as 'cautiousness'. They would pat themselves with pride for having such a sense of cautiousness!

This is definitely not cautiousness ... it is just passing the buck! Passing on the responsibility to someone else. It is a very disgusting thing to do. Persons with self-confidence take responsibility on themselves.

Look at the history of successful people.

There are many who have succeeded in life, without education, money and why, even arms or legs! There are such achievers; but no person has succeeded without self-confidence.

In Olympics, why do only a few countries win gold medals repeatedly? Many reasons can be given for this-availability of training facilities, professional coaching, basic infrastructure... but there is one very important reason. This is known as sports psychology. The Russians discovered it, but it has been well understood and developed by the Americans.

Sports psychology indicates that heightened physical activity is not sufficient to win any competition; but mental toughness is also required. That is to say, when an athlete is participating in a race, even if he thinks just for a moment that he might lose, it is enough to make him lose. He would not be able to perform with his full strength in the race after such a thought has entered his mind. So, not only while participating, but also while practicing, he must tell himself repeatedly with a strong belief- 'I am going to win!'

Go on playing the mental video of you winning and position yourself powerfully. This is known as 'Mental Rehearsal'.

Recently one of my students asked, 'Swamiji! I am not like others. I did not depend on a government job; I invested all my money in business. I faced a huge loss and now I am broke. Tell me how I can fill myself with self-confidence ?'

There were umpteen failures in the life of Abraham Lincoln.

When he was 7 years old, his family was forced out of home on a legal dispute.

At 9, his mother died.

At 22, he lost his job as a clerk.

At 25, he was defeated in a legislature election.

At 27, he had nervous breakdown.

At 28, he lost his beloved.

At 30, he lost the election for the post of a speaker.

At 35, he lost the Congress election.

At 46, he lost the Senatorial elections- around the same time he lost his son.

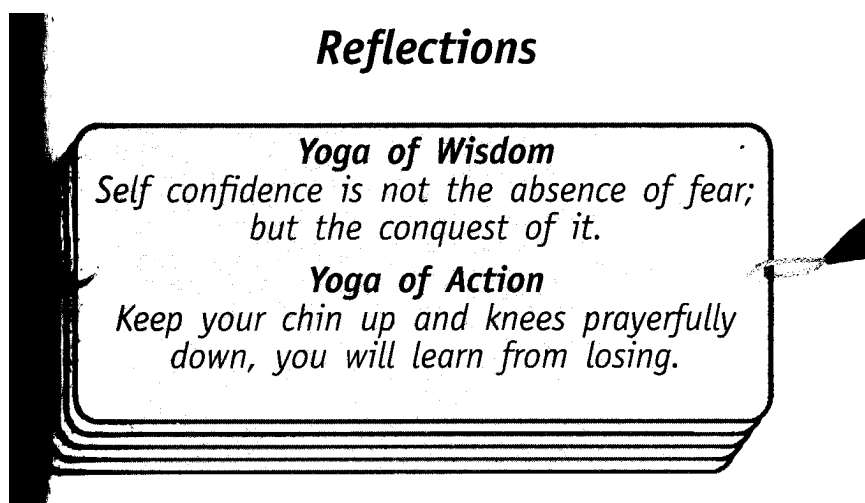
At 47, he lost the Vice Presidential elections.

These failures could not shake his self-confidence!

At 52, he became the President of USA.

So, please do not allow the past to damage your self-confidence!

Therefore, Oh, Life Relax Please!



Contemplation

Fear is food for fools.

Unhappiness dwells in the ruins of fear.

A diffident man in the house is a wellspring of sorrow.

Poor self-esteem builds a world of hell.

A good archer is not known by his bow and arrow but by his aim.



Chapter-16

JUST A WORD FOR THE YOUNG

You may have heard of the famous American Football Player – O J Simpson. Let us view him only as a great football player. He played like a tornado on the football field. When he played, the opposite team was as helpless as cotton wool in a storm. He achieved great victories. He earned millions of dollars and reached the zenith of his career at supersonic speed.

Simpson was born in a poor family. He was physically weak. He used to be teased as pencil legged as he had bone deformity. When he was a boy, he could not afford to buy a ticket for a football game. During those days, the most famous player was Brown.

One day, after a great game, Brown came out of the ground carrying an arm load of cups and shields. A little boy, who was just knee high, touched his leg. Brown bent down. 'Sir!' said the boy, 'I am your fan.' 'Ah, is that so?' said Brown and began to move away. Again the boy stopped him and said, 'Sir, I have all the details of the number of goals you have scored and the victories you have achieved from the beginning of your career!' Brown said 'Good!' with a casual smile and moved on ... but the small boy stopped him again and said, 'And one day I will break all your records!' Brown patted him on his shoulders in astonishment.

That little boy, on growing up, really broke all the records of Brown, just the way he had declared! That boy was -O J Simpson!

A person's life will be meaningful only if he has a goal in life.

Now tell me. What is the goal of your life?

The essence of one of the letters I received goes like this, 'Swamiji, I will be completing 35 years of age. I have changed many jobs such as an insurance agent, a cosmetics salesman, a field representative.... When I look back, I spent more money than I earned. I have become very depressed. What shall I do now?'

Anything material, money, car, house, position, etc. can be gifted to another, but there is only one thing that cannot be gifted to someone on a silver platter 'Success.' One can achieve it only if one works hard with smartness.

I think it would be appropriate to share the life history of Colonel Sanders. The fast food outlet of KFC has made its appearance in many Indian cities too. There are hundreds of such outlets all over the world. The yearly income of this fast food chain runs into several millions of dollars. The person who laid the foundation for this successful chain was one Colonel Sanders.

At an age when he should have been enjoying the relaxed lifestyle of a retired person-at sixty three-he could not live his life without a goal. He was neither a Harvard graduate nor came from a very rich family. He knew how to fry chicken that was juicy inside and crisp outside. He took the recipe and approached many restaurants. Several hoteliers turned him away, without even reading his recipe!

But did not lose heart. He did not give up his efforts. He went to many cities and gave his recipe to other hoteliers. Aged as he was, he climbed the steps of many, many restaurants. The total number of restaurants he approached was 1,006! He was the personification of perseverance. For two long years, he continued his relentless efforts and finally one hotelier evinced some interest in his recipe. The rest is history. Today, the world over, Kentucky Fried Chicken-KFC is famous!

Attitude is more important than mere dry facts. Colonel Sanders had an attitude of 'I can' rather than 'I can't'.

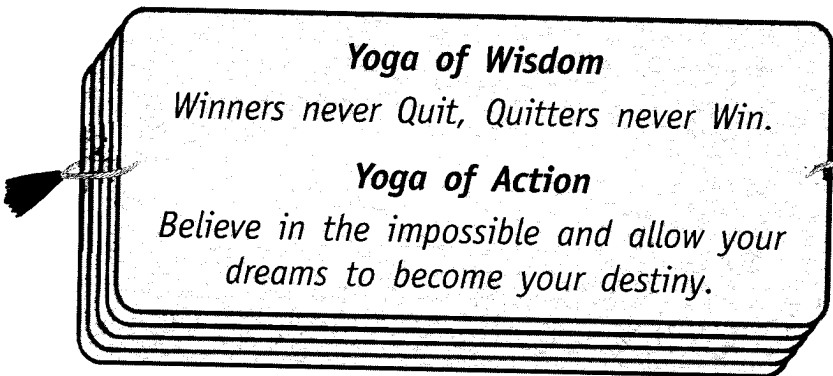
‘Cans’ create Success, 'Cants' create Failure.

Sir Winston Churchill had delivered a number of energizing orations. Once he was invited to deliver a speech to a youthful audience.

He spoke only one sentence. That sentence today has become a quotation used by many others. He said -

‘Never, never, never give up !'

Reflections



Chapter-17

“Opportunity Here & Now...”

I do not wish to work under someone. I want to run my own business. For that, I need capital and experience. So I am working as a sales representative in an organization. But in this profession, I have to go from house to house; organization to organization. In order to meet a person, I have to wait for hours together. Even to get an appointment to see someone, I have to visit the place several times. Many look down upon me as a 'nuisance' and treat me so. Because of this, my self-esteem has suffered severe blows. Sometimes I feel why at all should I get into any business. Why can't I get employed as a clerk in a company?

A young man from Thanjavur, a temple town in the State of Tamil Nadu, once wrote to me like this. Before attempting to answer his question, let us view an incident that took place in the life of Buddha.

A young man came to meet Buddha. But he was not aware that He was the enlightened Buddha. He was so enamored by the brightness and beauty of His presence, he asked Him...

‘Are you a Celestial being?’

‘No.’

‘Have you descended from the heavens?’

‘No.’

‘Then are you from this earth?’

‘No.’

Now the young man lost his patience and said, 'Then, who are you?'

'Oh! Son, you could have asked this question at the very outset!' said Buddha. 'I am a clean mirror, just reflecting what is.'

Please note that what is reflected does not pollute the mirror. If our consciousness can be like a mirror, then the life will have a different flavour.

This is a famous saying of Buddha. It has a very deep meaning.

When someone praises us as ‘capable, clever,’ what do we think?

'This person says I am intelligent. He thinks I know a lot. He calls me clever. He compares me with Chanakya. He feels that I am highly skillful. He is astounded at my intelligence ' In this manner, we create a heap of a thousand words of praise from a single word of appreciation.

Similarly, if someone calls us a fool, we add on a thousand words of insult and feel depressed.

But if our mind is like a plain mirror as Buddha said, then we would reflect only on the word spoken by the other person. We would not look into every possible interpretation of the word, and create meanings where none exist!

Now let us look at the question posed by the youngster from Thanjavur.

I am not going to tell him directly what to do and what not to do. I am only going to relate an incident in the life of Madan Mohan Malviya. Let him receive what he can from this incident!

Madan Mohan Malviya was the founder of The Banares Hindu University, in North India. While he was trying to build the university, he had to overcome many difficulties and barriers. He worked with determination to start the University. There was a funds crisis; but he did not get disheartened. He went from town to town, met many rich men and traders to collect donations. He went to the Nizam of Hyderabad to request him for funds.

The Nizam was furious, 'How dare you come to me for funds... that too for a Hindu University?' he roared with anger and took off his footwear and flung them at Malviya.

Malviya picked up the footwear and left silently. He came directly to the market place and began to auction the footwear. As it was the Nizam's footwear, many came forward to buy it. The price went up. When the Nizam heard of this, he became uneasy. He thought it would be an insult if his footwear were to be bought by someone for a pittance. So he sent one of his attendants with the instruction, 'Buy that footwear no matter what the bidding price be!'

Thus, Malviya managed to sell the Nizam's own footwear to, him for a huge amount. He used that money to build the Banares Hindu University!

I only wish to tell this to all those young men who are without an ideal or goal in life.

Do you know what prevents a person from succeeding? It is not his lack of skills or qualifications. It is his predetermined conclusion that the doors of opportunities are closed for him.

It is not what you have, but it is how you use what you have which makes a difference in your life.

Do not give up under the impression that "Opportunity is Nowhere!"

Take that sentence in the right spirit that "Opportunity is Now Here!" and move forward in your life!

Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflections

Yoga of Wisdom

Can your understanding be like a mirror reflecting what is; not distorting what is?

Yoga of Action

Work smartly; either lead or follow or get out of the way. Learn to use what life gives you.

Contemplation

A book that remains closed is just a block.

A flow of words is no proof of wisdom. A flow of actions is no proof of success.

All men are born richer than they die.

All insults are bearable if you know how to use your brain.



Chapter-18

NOT A COMFORT..... BUT A CURSE !

For some people, getting off the bed, early in the morning, even when they are fully awake is a difficult task! Though lots of work await everyone at home, at school and at the workplace, they consider early morning sleep as something that brings unusual joy!

'After awakening from sleep, how can one get out of bed instantly without lazing on the bed?'

What kind of question is this? It is actually a very sad affair. Just roll on your side, lean on your elbow and get up!

When our body does not do our bidding, could it not mean that some dangerous disease afflicts us?

Have you seen mentally challenged children? There is no co-ordination between their brains and their body movements. If the brain gives an instruction to the hand to take food towards the mouth, the hand goes towards the ear instead.

Just consider how lucky we are! Our brain is more than a computer, unmatched in many ways.

Our heart works for twenty four hours without taking rest...eyes are more efficient than the best movie cameras of the world ... many such wonders are in our body. What a waste of this wonderful body to just remain in bed without a purpose?

There is a word called procrastination. It means postponing doing things.

In spite of our body being wonderful, there exists a psychological lethargy. It creates weeds and thereby destroys our lives silently.

At an young age, I experienced a sad incident. My aunt, wife of a judge, died in a fire accident. While cooking, her saree caught fire; her inhibition prevented her from removing her saree and save herself. She felt shy to run from the kitchen to her bedroom as there were guests at home. In the process, the fire engulfed her totally and she died.

Procrastination is another form of psychological lethargy. Beware and be aware of it.

We may feel like cleaning the cobwebs in the house, but we say, 'Let us do it tomorrow' and postpone that job.

In the same way, there may be an important letter to be drafted in the office, but we would postpone it for more than a week saying, 'We can do it tomorrow' or 'Let us take care of it later.' Finally the very purpose of writing that letter would be lost.

How to overcome this disease of procrastination that acts as a barrier to our progress?

One must diagnose the disease before administering the treatment. So let us see how this disease of procrastination evolves.

We are awake in the morning and still in drowsiness. There are plenty of jobs that require our attention. In fact they are piling up. Yet, we do not feel like getting out of bed!

In order to justify our lethargy, we console ourselves saying...' Today is Saturday ... or Sunday...' or, " the manager is on leave today...' and so on. We want to enjoy the pleasure of rolling on the bed.

If you look at the reasons for lying on bed, it is because we are enjoying it. Even after the disappearance of sleep, rolling on bed for some more time with closed eyes gives us great joy!

If there is an announcement that whoever comes to office five in the morning will receive \$ 100, will we not reach office well in advance? What is the reason for this? We consider receiving \$ 100 as a greater joy than rolling on bed !

If you wish to get out of bed at five in the morning, try similar techniques to motivate yourself:

‘Helping children with their studies gives me more pleasure than merely rolling on the bed or cleaning the house gives me more joy.....’

'All this is very nice to hear. But is it practical ?' you might ask. For this query, I want to give an example from my personal experience.....

In my School, I was a volleyball champion. I had a lot of interest in other sports too. Every day I used to get up at five o'clock and run for two hours to build up my stamina! At the end of the marathon running, I used to be drenched with sweat. I experienced tremendous joy as though I had achieved something great.

Every Sunday, my mother used to ask me to buy vegetables. 'My God! The vegetable market is so far away! How can I go?' I used to lament.

'Every day you go past the market to run in the playground for two hours. That does not seem to be difficult for you. But to go to the nearby market is so difficult, is it?' My mother's anger still remains fresh in my memory.

Doing push-ups in school, as punishment was difficult, whereas doing the same as an exercise was a pleasure.

What I want to convey through these examples is a simple fact. There is no pleasure in rolling on the bed after waking up ... the joy lies in accomplishing the tasks coming up ahead in the day ... Shift your focus and see how you can get out of bed before sunrise.

You can perform any task without procrastination on the same day itself!

Please understand that these will never return

- A word that is uttered
- An opportunity that is missed
- A moment that is lost

Reflections

Yoga of Wisdom

True bliss is inexpensive,
yet how dearly we pay for its counterfeit.

Yoga of Action

Act out of happiness; not for happiness.

Contemplation

The longest life is but a bundle of moments. The remembrance of a well spent life makes life sweet.

Procrastination is another form of mental lethargy. A lazy man is like a dead dog which cannot bite.

An alert mind can open any door. A lazy mind knows how to close doors.

Try changing the source of your happiness and then see what happens!



Chapter-19

Wanted The Life of a Dolphin

Traders encroach walkways, authorities demand bribes to provide a birth certificate, police force misuses its authority, politicians are steeped in corruption without bothering about the welfare of the people.....everywhere, the world is full of anti-social elements.

When I think of them, my blood boils and my brain heats up like it is filled with hot acids. My limbs tremble and I get tense! Swamiji, can no one reform them?

There are many who pour out their frustrations like this. They get angry and their blood pressure shoots up! There are others who get depressed and go into their shells.

Their frustration is legitimate.

'If I see anti-social elements, my anger shoots up and mind gets disturbed.' This reaction is totally wrong. We have to pause and reflect for a moment as to how

the increase in our blood pressure would help in reforming these anti-social elements.

A busy Marketing Guru was waiting to board a flight.

There was an announcement on the closed-circuit TV –‘We are sorry to announce that the flight is delayed by about 4 hours' by a lady in her sweet voice. Fantastic! replied the Marketing Guru.

'What is fantastic about it,' asked a co passenger seated next to him.

'I see three reasons for the delay. Some technical snag in the plane; or something wrong with the pilot or the weather condition may be bad at the destination. I would not like to fly in any of these conditions,' was his reply.

After a few hours, there was another announcement of further delay by two hours.

To which the Marketing Guru again said, 'Fantastic!'

'Why do you say fantastic?,' asked the co passenger.

'More time to prepare for my next seminar,' said the Marketing Guru.

The co passengers, watching him, were confused. They asked him, 'Please tell us the truth. Are you not irritated by the delay?.' He replied, 'I am saying fantastic... only to avoid getting irritated. What choice do I have? By saying fantastic, I am creating an energy field of what I want to feel.'

This is called transformation vocabulary. This type of vocabulary creates an empowering energy field.

How to face issues like corruption, bribery that are intolerable?

To wish for a society free from corruption and bribery is ideal. It is a perfect state of affairs. But what is the reality? Our society is steeped in corruption and bribery!

If we view from an ideal point of view, only frustration would result. When there is frustration, the result is tension.

Blood pressure would rise. This is one approach commonly taken by many. There is another approach. 'Ending corruption? Impossible! Such a thing can never happen...' So saying, accepting reality as it is!

Both these approaches are wrong.

Even if we want an ideal society, first we must understand and accept what is the reality, then work with full involvement and determination to create that ideal society- that is, a society without corruption!

Only such an approach would be of use to you as well as to society. We must believe in that from the core of our hearts.

Do you see why am I emphasising and going to great lengths to explain?

Some people get annoyed not only by corruption, but also by silly mistakes committed at office, homeTheir blood pressure goes up, nerves get frayed.... if such an emotional outburst happens, they lose control like Mike Tyson and bite the ear of the opponent.

The result would be like Mike Tyson being banned from the game and we would be branded forever in society.

In boxing it is necessary to control emotions; just think how essential it is for us to be balanced. We are not only in one game; we play many games and that too in multiple roles.

‘Swamiji! What kind of justification is this? It is all right if anti-social elements exist only among politicians or hooligans. It is accepted as a necessary evil. But all around us in Offices, police stations, government establishments, in the neighbouring houses, why, at times within our own houses, persons involve in unfair Practices! How can we handle them?’ some of you may ask.

As I was wondering how to answer such a question, the following example I thought was the closest in parallel.

In the ocean, there are mainly three categories of fishes....

The first, tiny fish-they are unable to thwart the urges of the predatory fishes. Eventually, they become food for the predatory fishes.

The second, the sharks; they survive by swallowing other fishes.

The third, the dolphins-though they swim in the same ocean as the sharks, they do not succumb like small fishes. They are helpful. They know how to swim with the sharks and still stay alive. Can we be like dolphins -enjoy, be good and keep a wise distance from negative people and still stay alive?

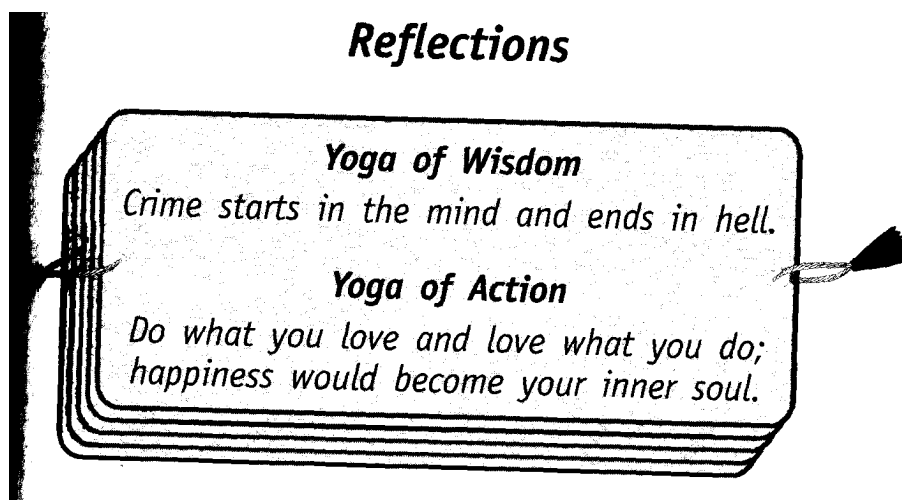
Recently in a TV interview, a person narrated that his hobby was to swim with the crocodiles. He said, if one were to know the psychology of the crocodiles, it is fun to swim with them.

Perhaps this may be true! Haven't we seen some birds happily cleaning the serrated teeth of a crocodile when its mouth opens?

Understand people's psychology and be like a dolphin.

Can we learn to lead our lives like dolphins? Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflections



Contemplation

One's self-talk is ones best friend or worst enemy.

Walk with the enlightened and be enlightened. Mix with the unwise and be misled.

Tension is a habit. Relaxation is also a habit. Make it a habit to be relaxed and happy.



Chapter-20 Break Walls.... Build Bridges !

Are we living lives that we really like? Ponder over it! Who prevents us from living a life of our choice? Are they our enemies or opponents?

Neither. They are our own inhibitions!

Inhibitions prevent us from living life the way we want to live. Very often, we hide in burrows called inhibitions. You may have felt within, 'Dad might have lived through many trying times for my sake!'

But, how often have you shared your thoughts and feeling with your father? Have you ever told him face to face, 'Dad! I love you very much!'

What prevented you from sharing your thoughts? Inhibitions!

Reflect on this real incident.

A young girl was traveling in a crowded bus. She sensed something moving inside her skirt. Out of inhibition, she was in a dilemma of finding out what it was even though she was experiencing a severe pain. She got down from the bus and walked all the way home. Even on the road her inhibition prevented her to remove the cause of her pain. When she reached the gate of her house, she fell down dead. Later it was found that a black scorpion was the cause of her death.

Look at the price one has to pay for harbouring inhibition. If parents themselves are inhibited, they transmit the same energy to their children also.

This happens in many joint families. Due to the inhibition of being teased by family members, a husband hesitates to bring home flowers for his wife. If at all he were to bring flowers, he would bring them stealthily – like bringing dangerous narcotics or drugs!

Like a dumb person's dreams, unexpressed and hidden, many a lover's feelings does not reach the other. It dies within them. The reason, of course, being inhibition!

An insignificant bickering that took place many years ago could still linger in the minds of many and result in strained relationships. It could be between siblings, father and children or colleagues. Such situations build barriers like the Great Wall of China. The reason for the hurt feelings may have been forgotten over the years, but they nevertheless continue to live in isolation! The cause for such agony is inhibition.

To have better relationships, we must build bridges... not walls.

Some may like to sing, others – to dance, and many may even wish to weep – shedding bottled – up tears, but they hesitate to indulge in such simple pleasures being inhibited by what others may think or say!

There are two aspects: 'Looking Good' and 'Feeling Good'.

For the sake of looking good in the eyes of others, we push aside the aspect of feeling good.

Looking good prevails over feeling good. The result is that we are unhappy, because we don't feel good. We are more committed to look good rather than feel good.

When are we going to attain freedom from the barrier called inhabitation.

Gopi as a fourteen – years old lad, was unable to score the high grades that is father wanted him to. He had even failed in the final exam.

'Useless fellow! Don't stand before me... get lost somewhere,' the father had reprimanded Gopi. Now the father had erected an iron curtain between himself and his son. Years passed. Gopi completed schooling and joined college.

Though the father loved his son, he was unable to express his natural affection; he even found it difficult to sit and chat with him.

He regretted the rift that had strained their relationship.

One day on his return from work, the father went straight to Gopi and presented him with a book.

“Gopi! One of my subordinates gave this book to me as a sign of his affection towards me. He said, ‘Gift this book in turn to someone you love most dearly in this world.’ You are the one that I love the deepest in this world, hence, I am presenting this book to you.”

‘Dad! All these years, I was under the wrong impression that you did not love me at all.

Many a time, I considered myself a burden to you. In fact, I had planned to swallow pills and commit suicide tonight,’ he said.

The father did not allow Gopi to speak any further. He hugged him and wept profusely. In that flood of tears, the great wall dividing father and son gave way.

Do you love your father, mother, children, husband, and wife with all your heart?

An iron curtain may be a blockade for a long time. You might not have expressed your love and gratitude for years. Let your curtain of inhibition drop right away at this moment.

Reach out and express yourself whole – heartedly to your dear ones; for you may not know what the next moments hold in store for you!

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

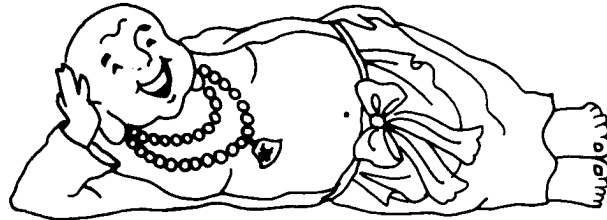
A man is not respected for having brains, but for using it. Use your brains to break your inhibitions.

Yoga of Action

Let love convert scars into stars.



Contemplation



Being inhibited is a luxury one can't afford.

*Misunderstanding is the night of the mind but a night without the moon,
stars or silence.*

Chapter-21

Who will not be pardoned ?

Torrential rain with gusty wind battered a small village for more than a week. Many Banyan trees lay uprooted. The village lake breached and water gushed out. People afraid of the impending floods, began to move out of the village, collecting their meagre belonging and cattle. But one person stayed on, saying, 'I will not run away in fear. I believe in God, he would surely save me!'

It was night. The village was flooded and even the devotees' house was full of water. He climbed to the roof and prayed for the mercy of God. People from the neighbouring village passed by his house in a boat. They were also moving away to escape from the floods. They saw him clinging to the roof and called out, 'Come, come with us! Let us escape from here!'

'No, I won't come. God will save me!' God will save me!' he said, refusing to go with them.

The breach widened. Incessant rain further increased the level of water in the lake and the gushing waters flooded his house completely, submerging the roof on which the devotee was perched. He made one mighty leap and latched on to a nearby tree. There, he reached the top of the tree and prayed to God to save him.

One of the last rescue boats passed by. People in the boat saw him hanging precariously from the top branch and called out, 'Hey come on, jump into the boat! We shall save you!'

And again he refused saying that God would surely come and save him and continued his prayer.

A little later, the gushing waters swept the tree from its roots including the devotee. The devotee was drowned.

He met God in Heaven. He told, 'God! I had immense faith in you. But you abandoned me in the midst of water. I was your devotee for lifetime. You however let me down. I am not worried about that... but your act has strengthened the beliefs of those who defy you or deny your existence. I am only concerned about that!'

God replied with a meaningful smile, 'Your devotion has few parallels. Because of that, I sent boats to save you, not once but twice! But you missed both the opportunities!'

People are too stuck to their point of view; hence they miss seeing the magic of life dancing in front of them.

This world may forgive those who have failed, but it would never forgive those who sit idle, without utilizing the opportunities that come their way. They would not respect them either!

A handsome, educated young man was in a decent profession. Many young women longed to marry him.

He however rejected each one of them saying, 'You are not good enough for my looks; you cannot be an equal for my educational qualifications; you are not rich enough for me...!'

After twenty long years, he finally found a girl who met his expectations. He approached her and recounted his details – his education, his wealth and his position. He declared, 'You are a perfect match. I am willing to marry you!'

The girl replied with a mocking smile, 'Everything is perfect from your angle, but I can't marry you... you are not up to my expectations! You are not a perfect match for me.'

Opportunity is not something that comes from scriptures or planets. Many a time, we have to create the circumstance for an opportunity. Highly successful people create circumstances for opportunities and they are alert when opportunities arise.

Now, just tell me, 'Which of these describe you best?'

Are you one who waits for an opportunity ?

Or

Are you one who is asleep when an opportunity knocks at the door?

Or

Are you one who creates circumstances for an opportunity?

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

Live in faith and bury doubt instead of living in doubt and burying faith.

Yoga of Action

When opportunity knocks do not complain of noise but instead hunt for the treasure.



Chapter 22

Look at the roots!

Many of you have high regard for Japanese products that are sold all over the world. Many American and European companies are in mortal fear of the invasion of Japanese products in their markets.

Let us take an example of the Honda Company, a leading automobile manufacturer.

If one traces the roots of this company, one can find the perseverance of a very simple and ordinary Japanese man named Honda.

Honda was a simple person. He attempted to design a new type of piston to improve the performance of cars. He was sure his attempt would yield path breaking results. He offered his designs to Toyota. The engineers turned his offer down, without even meeting him.

But he did not lose heart. His repeated attempts at meeting Toyota engineers finally succeeded; but only to see that his product was ridiculed by them. Not losing heart, he went into great details to convince them. At last he obtained an order to supply pistons to Toyota.

Honda invested all his resources – money, material, knowledge, hard work – as capital and constructed a plant for producing pistons. Suddenly, there was an earthquake in Japan that destroyed his factory.

Yet, Honda reposed faith in his own ability!

Once again, he started construction afresh.

When it was ready and the production was to start the following week, World War II broke out. Bombs bombarded Japan and most of country was devastated and so was Honda's factory!

Although Honda lost his factory, property, wealth and friends, he did not lose his self – confidence. He continued his efforts and began to construct his factory for the third time.

Today, the Honda Car Company produces and sells more cars than Toyota. Honda was not only an example for the word 'Perseverance' but also added honour to it!

Most of us wilt when faced with minor setbacks. We back out when problems recur. Let us study successful people.

Successful people are always a part of a solution, not victims to problems. This is seen clearly from the life of Honda.

Einstein was dismissed from school with a remark that he was a dullard. Had he given up then, the world would never have known the greatest scientist of all times.

Norma Jean Baker was a young girl who aspired to be a model. The modelling company rejected her; instead offered her the post of a clerk... If she had buried her dreams of becoming a model, a wonderful film artist called Marilyn Monroe would never have been the dream girl of many.

Music was the breath for Beethoven – a German Musician. His hearing was impaired. At the age of forty – six, it became worse and finally he turned totally deaf. For a great musician, nothing could be more devastating than this. Any commoner would have been completely distressed. But Beethoven overcame the handicap. He created great compositions of music that included Five Symphonies.

A newspaper owner told a young artist to pursue any other vocation saying he did not possess creative original ideas. However, the young artist went on to build the Walt Disney empire through his original idea of Mickey Mouse.

In 1962, the Decca Recording Company turned down the work of Beatles. The Beatles turned out to be such great singers.

‘We will succeed’ – this desire should burn like ember within us. The ember of enthusiasm should never be put off.

In order to reach the peak of success, it is but natural that one has to face many impediments. Just as mountaineers face all hurdles like stones, thorns, wild beasts, cold, snowstorms... one has to face difficulties while progressing towards success. If one gets disheartened and withdraws from the goal, the joy of success would be unattainable!

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

Perseverance and faith in oneself are invaluable assets one can have.

Yoga of Action

If you consistently do your best, the worst won't happen... - B.C. Forbes



Chapter 23

Focus your vision and lend your ears!

No one understands me.... Is the grumbling of many.

Swami, even my wife does not understand me. What should I do? – this is the cribbing of many husbands.

If a person cannot develop a good relationship with his wife, then with who else can he develop a good relationship or friendship?

E – Mail and Internet have brought people from all over the world closer to each other than ever before. In the changing scenario, no country operates individually, in isolation. In the information age, friendship and contacts with people the world over, has become imperative.

But, what is the reality? We find it difficult to even begin a conversation with an unknown person. We are unable to strengthen existing friendships with already known persons. We move away from others with complaints such as – ‘One has no manners, one is an egoist, narrow minded...’

You get your superior and he fails to respond, this one incident makes you conclude ‘He thinks too high of himself and does not respect others.’ This is

where the trouble starts. Perhaps, your superior may not have noticed your greeting.

A Philippine monk came to learn the Vedas – ancient Indian texts. During a brief interaction, I taught him Sanskrit. In return, he offered to teach me Tantra. ‘Tantra’ does not mean black magic or some such mumbo – jumbo! There is a technique to read the minds of other people... He offered to teach certain methods; but I refused saying that I do not need them. When knowing my mind itself is a big mystery, why should I know the minds of other people?

The next day, while returning, the monk told me with a deep sense of sorrow, ‘It is terrible to know what is in the minds of others. I am able to see all the lies, slyness, ulterior motives and perversions. Due to this, I am unable to show affection to anyone; to an extent that when someone is praising me, I am unable to listen to that! My whole attention is diverted to what he is thinking inside.’

The reason for relating this incident is to tell you not to infer what the other person is thinking. Because, if you interact with others with this intention, you may not even be able to listen to what he is saying!

Why learn skills which create problems? Why pick on unessential? Viveka – meaning discrimination, in Jainism.

A tramp was limping with a high heeled boot on one foot and none on the other foot. Seeing him struggling, a passer – by asked, ‘Have you lost one of your shoes?’ He said, ‘No’ and added that he found one boot; hence he wore it.

We pick up the unessential’s and suffer.

To develop friendship, it is essential to listen to others attentively. This helps us build interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal skills are essential to develop friendships with others around us; at home, at the workplace... etc.,

Once Leo Buscaglia had been to park and met a stranger.

‘Hello! How are you?’

‘We have not even met each other earlier. How can you say hello to me?’ The stranger said and moved away.

The next day, Leo met the same person again. He said, ‘Hello, how are you? We have met before!’ and the person could not help but laugh!

What does a person with interpersonal skills do when he meets a business associate for the first time? He learns to build a rapport.

If the associate is sitting straight, the other person would also sit straight. If the associate is sitting in a relaxed position, the other person too would sit in a relaxed manner. This is known as ‘Body Match.’

Those who are experts in interpersonal skills would not be talking continuously without allowing the other person to talk. They listen attentively by encouraging the other person to talk; thereby indicating their interest in him.

The next most important point is 'eye contact'. If someone is speaking and we look elsewhere, the speaker would infer that he is boring us and stop speaking. So, no matter whom we are talking or listening to, it is imperative to have eye contact during the interaction.

There is a difference between 'Looking' and 'Staring'. Can one learn the art of looking?

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

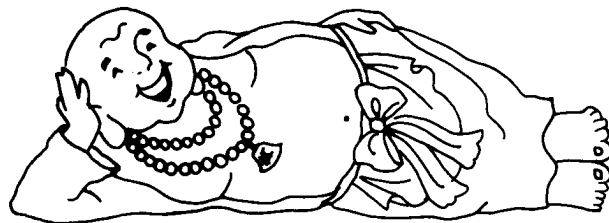
It is not who is right, but what is right.

Yoga of Action

Be sensitive to oneself and to others



Contemplation



Don't be truck with your point of view for you may miss the real point.

To be perfect is being imperfect.

Do you want to be a part of solution or a prisoner of your problems?

We should learn to love those who point to our faults. But we always miss this opportunity.

If your happiness cannot last long, neither can your unhappiness too.

Use the device again!

Is your married life dull? Do you feel that the interest you had in each other has waned? Have the differences between the two of you, grown over the years?

Do not worry? Bring back the memories of yore when both of you were happy. There may be the days when you were in love or just home to see her with great eagerness! You may begin to notice something.

During those days, you were aware of each moment shared with her. Both of you had views that were intense and similar. At times, even when you touched her, your feelings would have been live, like fire. Every word uttered was heard with rapid attention. Think back and find out what kept your life full of joy during those happy times.

For some, happiness means going out to temples, parties, beach, park... if you had taken her to these places, she would have been overjoyed thinking, 'Oh, how deeply does my husband love me!'

This type of people are categorized as 'Visual Type.'

Now, let us say just because I have said this, you take your wife to all the places...! Your wife may then feel, what is wrong with my husband? Why is he dragging me to all these places?' the reason for this reaction could be – your wife is not the 'Visual Type,' but an 'Audio Type.'

This means, at any given opportunity, the husband should express, 'I love you!', 'You are beautiful!.' This sari suits you well...' So, each person is different.

If she goes on talking to herself, she is an audio type. If she thinks and posturizes, she is the visual type.

Now, in order to find out which category your spouse belongs to, recollect the days you were happy.

Use the particular device that makes your spouse happy. Be it Visual or Audio.

No matter what conflicts your dace, you can once again go back to those honeymoon days!

If you find your partner is 'Visual Type', use visual expressions, invoke visual scenarios, create visual memories and magically you'll find the other becoming happy.

Also if one is unhappy, bring happy memories either visual or auditory and see those happy memories dominate one's mind. Let unhappy memories go to the background. Experience the magic of what happens.

How to practice? When you are unhappy, identify the source of unhappiness; audio or video form. Then push them away as far as possible like throwing away an unwanted object.

Recollect happy memories and feel them as real and close. Magically, in a moment you will change. In a changed state which is a happy state, you will see the positive in your partner.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

The most difficult task is to open a closed mind.

Yoga of Action

Act on the understanding that great minds have good purpose; others have wishes.



Chapter 25

The garden of joy!

A prosperous business man complaint!

‘Swamiji, my daughter has not even completed her college education. But she has many ‘boyfriends.’ She goes to places like discos, pubes, hotels... habitually she comes home late at night. I am ashamed to say that she even had an abortion. I thought she would reform if I get her married and I found a groom from a good family and got her married. They went to a number of foreign countries for honeymoon. It is now less than a year since they got married, but she is back to roaming around with her boyfriends. Her marriage is in danger of breaking up now.

I spoke to the girl, at length.

Recently her father – in – law met me again. He said with a great sense of happiness that she was living happily with her husband. This issue is an exception... but as far as our country is concerned, such women are few. Only

one in a lakh women go astray like this. Because, our women consider chastity as the very breath of their life.

On the other hand, just think – in our country, how many couples live happily?

‘It is only for the sake of children that I continue to live with you. If we had no children, I would have snapped the martial ties long back, moved away and gone!’ How many wives declare openly like this and yet continue to live with their husbands?

Married life can be like evergreen, fertile land capable of multiple crops. Instead, why does it wilt under dry spells? How many children grow up watching furious squabbles between their parents, as though they were living through a war?

How to transform such a relationship into a garden of joy where birds sing and butterflies flutter around?

How to bring in the cool comfort of a heavenly waterfall at home?

The answers to these lie in a fundamental truth.

What is the truth?

In any relationship, there are bound to be differences of opinion. Some differences will remain resolved. Universally, you can never find a couple without discord. Please understand this truth.

Even between Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi, there existed differences of opinion; problems had erupted.

One should learn to be happy despite problems. One should learn the art of dissipating a problem without allowing it to grow to mammoth proportions.

In this context, we must understand one more aspect very clearly.

It is not the unresolved differences of opinion or problems that give grief. It is only the perspective with which we view them that creates trouble. For example, one may enjoy the thrill of riding on a roller coaster, but the other may be filled with a mortal fear at the very thought of a giant wheel!

Can we say that it is OK to have differences rather than it is not OK to have differences? If couples can respect differences, many quarrels would disappear.

How to create an excellent martial relationship?

First and foremost, whenever a problem arises, do not shift the blame onto the spouse. On the other hand, own the responsibility. When you try to solve a problem with this frame of mind, the doors of solution open. The very attitude creates a recipe for success.

Another reason for strained relationships between couples is – argument. In order to eliminate argument in a relationship, the couple should encourage discussion. Discussions are healthier than arguments. But the basis for the relationship between husband and wife is love. Bringing logic in place of love breeds incompatibility.

Think for a while! What happens when there is an argument between a husband and wife? The husband tries to prove logically how the wife is wrong. She on the other hand, tries to prove the husband wrong by using her logic. Here logic prevails over love.

There was a famous lawyer. A dispute between the owner of a company and the labour union was being heard in a court. The lawyer argued with great fervour taking the side of the labour union, citing law, precedents... highly convincing the Judge.

As he was about to sit down, feeling victorious, his junior was shocked! The lawyer was supposed to argue in favour of the management... but he had argued in favour of the labour union. The junior gently whispered the blunder. The lawyer shifted gears in a trifle and continued, ‘Oh! My Lord, my opponent may argue the way I narrated just now; But that is not correct! I say so, because....’ And set forth all points in favour of the management.

Finally, the judgment was passed in favour of the management.

If one wishes to argue on the basis of knowledge and logical thinking, one can speak in any way... either for or against. But as far as family life is concerned, one cannot hope to solve a problem by logic or by arguing back and forth. This act will only worsen the problem instead of resolving it.

My advice to couples is – when there is a problem in the family, own responsibility for it by saying, ‘I am the cause,’ and try to resolve it. This is the best way to face and resolve a problem.

My suggestion to men; don’t get lost in trying to understand a woman; you will get more confused. Instead love her unconditionally. On the contrary, a woman, more than loving a man, should try to understand him... in the space of love. See the magic happening in both of you.

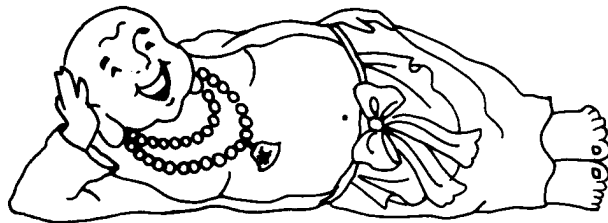
Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

Arguments should be harmonized; not harnessed.

Yoga of Action

Open discussions (Samvadda) is the only cement that binds a relationship.



Contemplation

Very often a friend is not known till he is lost.

Help is just a prayer's length away.

Good understanding is better than silver or gold.

Let not the foolishness of logic prevail over the richness of love.

Chapter 26

A fact known to a crow

Another aspect that breaks up a relationship between husband and wife is – EGO!

If the husband takes a stand – ‘I am the bread winner’ and the wife, ‘I am in no way less important to the family,’ and act from their respective stands, the family would be shaken to the core.

A crow found a piece of meat. The moment it picked up the piece of meat, the other crows and eagles began chasing it. The crow soared higher and higher to safeguard the meat. The others chased it relentlessly. At one point, the crow dripped the meat; the other crows and eagles that were chasing it, charged towards the meat that had fallen on the ground.

Now that the crow was free from the others, it realized a great truth.

‘It is but true that I lost the meat, but then, I have obtained a great freedom!’

The ego within us is very similar to this piece of meat. If you could drop it, then life would become buoyant. One need not have any tension! Just as the crow could enjoy the beauty of the vast sky, we too can see the beauty of life!

Vedas contain four sections – Artha Shastra, Dharma Shastra, Kama Shastra, and Moksha Shastra. The Moksha Shastra says: ‘Only when we drop our ego, do we realize the blissful form that is within us!’

Artha Shastra advocates ‘Earn money out of love; not out of greed.’ Greed can never satisfy us.

Kama Shastra advocates ‘Convert sex into prayer.’

Dharma Shastra advocates ‘Let goodness be the foundation of life; not sheer ambition.’ Out of goodness, let ambition arise.

Yet another main aspect which is very important for strengthening the relationship between husband and wife is – intimacy.

The family – the parents, siblings, spouse and children deserve our love and care. But while we do not share everything with them, we confide freely with friends. Over a period of time, a feeling of intimacy develops between friends and ourselves.

Similarly to be intimate in a relationship, treat your spouse as your friend. Let there be transparency in your words and deeds.

Some declare with pride, ‘I do not discuss all office matters at home!’ the reason given by them is, ‘If I share office matters with my wife, she may not be able to understand them. In fact, she may get confused and worried.’

This may be true to an extent. But it is not so difficult to overcome this simple hurdle, so as not to build a wall in the relationship.

When someone shares his troubles, dreams or worries.... What would a good friend do? He would not jump at once to give him advice. ‘Solve this problem like this... do this, don’t do that...’ instead, he would just listen lovingly and allow him to speak. In fact, he would create an atmosphere for meaningful sharing. Similarly, if one speaks about an office matter, he would not judge his friends saying, ‘You are unfit to handle this... you are not experienced enough!’

A wonderful sentence by Mother Teresa.

‘Don’t spend your time in judging others... then you will not have time to love them!’

Let us return to the relationship between husband and wife...!

When your husband is eager to share his dreams, profession, hobbies, new interests... give him both your ears – without interruption. Show interest in his sharing. An exquisite intimacy would develop between the two of you! Whatever new experiences he gains in the world outside, he is sure to come rushing to share that with you.

It is absolutely essential that such an intimacy should exist between husband and wife. It is worth looking at an advice provided in Christianity to nourish the intimacy between husband, wife and children.

‘A family that prays together every night will stay together till the end!’

In order to develop intimacy between a couple, certain methodologies need to be adopted in their lifestyles. We all have in our minds a number of unwritten lists of priorities. The husband may have – earning an income, taking care of parents, education of children.... Similarly, the wife too may have her own list... caring for children, family members, TV shows, news gadgets...

These are known as Values.

‘If the values of both are similar, only then would the relationship be without arguments or bickering. ‘This is totally untrue. On the other hand, it may be boring, if the value systems of the both are similar. The rainbow is pretty to look at only because it has many colours.

The husband, back home after a week’s tour, wishes to have home – cooked food. But the wife says, ‘For the whole week, I have been sitting at home and cooking. Let us go to a restaurant for a change!’

You receive as much as you give.

One is more blessed in giving than receiving.

One must develop an attitude of giving in to the taste and interest of the spouse on trivial issues. In fact it leads to strengthening intimacy.

‘Swamiji ! My wife always asks me to accompany her while visiting relatives. I don’t like this one bit! So how can I give in? Do not ask me to do this!’

In married life, one has to compromise on certain issues which one may not really like or enjoy, for the sake of others. One should learn to support the other’s likes and dislikes even though they are different. An intimacy is bound to develop.

You have to learn to like what you dislike too and even dislike what you like; so that you are about likes and dislikes. Then you have likes and dislikes, but not likes and dislikes having you! This is true mastery.

Be a master of likes and dislikes.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

The safest way of disagreeing is accepting differences as possible points of view.

Yoga of Action

Learn to talk to yourself that is OK to have differences. The wisest way to settle a difference is on the basis of what is right and not who is right.



Chapter 27 Play of words

No one ever understands me! Complain many. Only a weak mind would wail like this!

Because, anyone with a little mental toughness would not moan like this! On the contrary, they claim that they understand the others around them.

This is applicable even to couples. Many couples live like enemies under one roof. The reason being lack of understanding.

In every one's mind, there is a map of how the other should be. We create pictures based on this map. 'How to laugh when happy? How to cry when sad? How to behave when angry?' the answers to these are well defined in everyone's mind.

Our constant effort is to see a person in terms of our maps; if not, we get upset. Should the map fit the territory or the territory fit the map?

Here is an example.

A wife had the notion that speaking aloud tantamount to disrespecting others. Her husband, from a different culture, felt speaking aloud on an important issue would draw the required attention of others.

What would have been the result?

When the husband emphasized on what he was saying, he would raise his voice. The wife would consider this as disrespect and move away. According to the husband, walking out amidst discussion was disrespectful to others.

So he would raise his voice still further and say, 'Listen to what I have to say and then go!'

Just consider for a second, what would happen if the reactions were vicious!

An ordinary conversation between the two would create a great rift between them.

Another example.

A wife brought up in a culture where the word 'Idiot' was equivalent to pampering the beloved. She liberally called her husband 'Idiot' meaning

'Darling, sweet – heart....'

Whereas the husband, from a different culture, viewed this as an insult. While studying in school, he was branded as 'idiot' for no fault of his. This lingering insult surfaced whenever his wife endearingly called him.

Again consider for a second, what would happen if the reactions were vicious!

Yet another example to drive home the point.

A newly married couple had just settled in. Once the husband casually opened the cupboard of his wife. The wife from the kitchen called out in fun, 'Hey you idiot!' and the husband felt extremely hurt.

The word is the same... but the meanings attributed to it by each one is different.

Again my advice is:

While you converse with each other, particularly while dealing with a problem, do not look at the literal meaning of the word spoken... doubly check how the spoken word is understood by the spouse. There is a trigger point in every one. Let your experience guide you. Please understand, each word triggers a subjective meaning is an individual. This subjective meaning depends on one's own background. Be sensitive on this.

A Guru was delivering a discourse. During his intercourse, he asked one of his favourite disciple, 'Oh! Kuppuswamy, has it entered?' (...meaning his teaching entered.)

Kuppuswamy looking at the roof answered, 'The body has gone in, but the tail is still hanging.' (.... Referring to a rat which was entering into a hole.)

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

Words can create bridges or walls.

Yoga of Action

Act from the center and not from the periphery. Act out of meaning, not out of words.



Chapter 28

Man is a victim of his own foolish logic

The sky was open and filled with emptiness. Birds that were gliding added depth to the empty sky. The trees were still and the ground was marked by their shadows. A lovely deer nearby was filled with curiosity as it watched us singing Bhajans.

In the midst of all this, a woman asked, ‘Why can’t I continue my life with this serenity, joy and calmness for ever? I invariably go home stressed and pick on my loving husband. After bickering, we end up eating more. Then our life resolves round reducing our body weight and we start quarrelling again. Can there be an end to this chaos?’

I tried to answer her query with a story.

The Westerner intending to learn Indian archery comes to a Guru. The Westerner asks the Guru, ‘Can you please teach me archery?’ The Guru says, ‘Observe me and learn archery. Learning is in the quality of observation.’ The Guru demonstrates by hitting the target. Then he invites the student to give it a try. This continues for a long time; the Westerner just observes and then gives it a try; but always misses the target.

One day the Westerner hits the target; and out of great joy rushes to the Guru, ‘Oh! Guru, I have learnt archery.’

The Guru asks him to demonstrate. As the Westerner picks up the bow and arrow and aims at the target, the Guru says, ‘You have missed the target.’

The Westerner is perplexed. Even before he could hit the target, how could the Guru say that he missed the target?

This practice continues for some more time. The Westerner gets upset with the Guru, packs his luggage and is about to leave the ashram. For the last time he wants to observe how the Guru aims at the target.

At once, his observation makes him realize the Guru's teaching.

He drops his luggage, bows down to the Guru and says, 'Oh! Guru, I have learnt archery' and takes the bow and arrow. As he aims at the target, the Guru says, 'You have learnt archery.'

The Westerner observes that more than hitting the target, it is the way that one aims at the target that is important. He learns to pick the bow and arrow and aims at the target in a relaxed way. This is the art of archery.

In life, we may have many targets. What we need to learn is, the atmosphere in which, we go about reaching the target. Is our being calm and relaxed?

There are two sources of stress:-

- Internal Stress
- External Stress

Internal Stress involves :-

- Thoughts
- Values
- Beliefs
- Opinions

External Stress involves:-

- Wrong exercise
- Wrong breathing habits
- Wrong eating habits
- Pollution
- Wrong sleeping habits

Nobody can avoid stress in life. One has to minimize stress. And that is possible if one can work on both internal and external stress. The most important factor is our mind and how it looks at life.

Reflect on this incident.

At the end of one a program, a lady celebrated by dancing for three hours. After some time she was drinking coffee, coffee spilt on her beautiful sari. Immediately she screamed saying her joy from the three – hour dance was gone.

Looking at this incident, I learnt that three hours of happiness was invalidated by a sorrow lasting for a few seconds. If our mind can work like this, the reverse is also possible. The three hours of sorrow can get invalidated by a few seconds of joy.

- The secret of being happy is to recollect happy incidents in life and heighten joy.
- When unhappy, weaken its effect by distancing its pictures and not identifying with it.

Can you bring the following insights into your life?

- Understand the mind
- Transform the mind
- Transcend the mind

Transforming the mind involves this understanding:

- There is no complete satisfaction in life; there is a possibility to improve upon.
- We don't have to win every time in order to be happy; happiness does not depend only on success.
- Learn to respond and not react in life.

If one continues reacting, reaction becomes a habit. Then an egoistic and reactive 'I' emerges. It will have its own foolish logic.

Reflect on this story.

A dog and a cat had an interesting conversation. The dog said, 'I am so lucky that the owner of the house serves me, the children of the house adore me. So I feel they are God.' The cat also said, 'The owner of the house pets me, children of the house adore me, the servant maid serves me. So I feel I am God.'

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

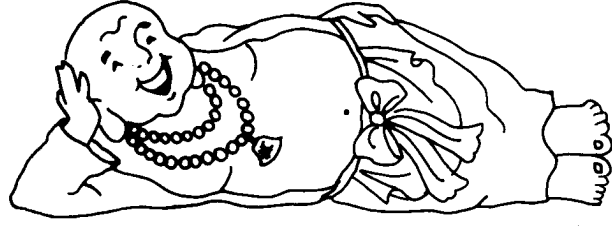
There is no limit to either stress or ignorance.

Yoga of Action

Knowledge may have its limits but not stress.



Contemplation



A crown does not cure headache. Ego does not crown the quality of life.

A family's blessings can neither be drowned in water nor burnt by fire.

You only receive as much as you give. One is more blessed in giving than receiving.

The world is not obligated to fit into your maps of life.

Fact is fact. Feeling is feeling. Does your feeling come from fact or opinion?

A wise man corrects his opinions whereas a fool clings to it.

Chapter 29

Tension is ugly and Relaxation is Beautiful

There was a very big and lovely lake. Green grass festooned the embankment like a garland. There was a beautiful temple and all around were coconut trees. The morning sun appeared to be smiling from behind the clouds, radiating its lustre. A snake slithered gracefully at one corner of the temple just as the priest chanted Vedic hymns. There was silence all around.

The mystery of silence engaged me in an inner dialogue – with peace and clarity. Can silence be cultivated? Is there not a hidden harmony in silence? Except for silence, everything else seems to be a meaningless noise. There is poetry in silence that can really sustain us. It is only in silence that we get close to the centre of the universe.

Only a mind that is silent is sacred. It is the mind that can discover truth. It is in this space that life will not just be mundane and mechanical but a dance from moment to moment, from the cradle to grave.

‘Swamiji, please talk to us of tension, attention and relaxation. Why is it that when I sit in your silent presence I lose my tension and a new wakefulness arises? How can I keep this stillness in all walks of my life? Can my life be one long movement of joy?’ asked a student.

It is said some of us think; many of us think that we think and most of us never think of thinking. We live our lives clouded by certain myths and are not guided by clarity in thought. Tension has nothing to do with the outside; it has everything to do with the inside.

Seeking causes for it outside is just looking for a scapegoat; we use our manipulative minds to project that the causes for tension are outside.

When you enter a dark room you may collide with a chair and get hurt. Showering your anger on the chair, in such a situation, is meaningless. Darkness is the problem. Tension comes from darkness – the inner darkness of ignorance. Darkness inside exists in our thought processes that make us constantly compare or compete. Let us see how.

Our life is lived in comparisons – this breeds tension.

Reflect on this incident.

A classmate of mind from my school days attended one of my lectures on stress management. After listening to my lecture, he expressed happiness on meeting me but at the same time admitted to feeling very low.

I asked him ‘Why?’

‘You are such a good speaker and look at me – I even feel shy to ask you a question. I feel miserable,’ he said. Seated next to him were his beautiful wife two wonderful kids. He was tall, handsome and earned a fat salary. I also learned from another friend of his that he had a marvellous house and owned a Mercedes Benz. As you would see, his tension came from unnecessary comparisons.

Each one of us is unique. If we realize this uniqueness our lives would not be filled with tension. What we need is a clear understanding and accepting of our uniqueness. Just as there are tall trees and small trees, the moon is high in the sky and grass grows low on earth, we should learn to accept the existence of differences in life. If you do this, you would experience how tension disappears.

The other reason for tension is unnecessary competition. In a rat race, even if you win you would continue to be a rat. Do not lose yourself in a rat race of competition.

Reflect on this:

A man tells his friends ‘Even after 15 years of marriage, my wife comes to the bus stop and picks me up.’

Another says ‘Even after 20 years, my wife comes and picks me up from the railway station every day.’

The third one says ‘For the last 25 years a lady drops me to the station and picks me up every day and she is not my wife!’

Even in lies we compete. Learn from the other. Be happy with the other person; you don’t have to compete.

In the presence of an enlightened master you feel relaxed as a wise man who is harmoniously content with what is.

A wise man lives from moment to moment. Each moment is wondrous; each moment is full and complete in itself. Each moment is a song of the divine. Each moment is lived in the serendipitous mystery of the beyond. He respects the present moment. The present alone is real as the past is dead and gone while the future is unborn as yet. To be awake in the present moment is to love the present moment. In such a presence, the vibes will be very relaxing. Hence seek the company of the wise. Their beings will speak louder than words.

To relax is to love life. Life includes death. Accept life and death. Dance with life and death comes dancing to a wise man. Do not postpone living life. Do not get lost in preparing to live.

Dance every moment and not get lost in waiting to be happy. In such a space you will not be a beggar but a giver.

Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

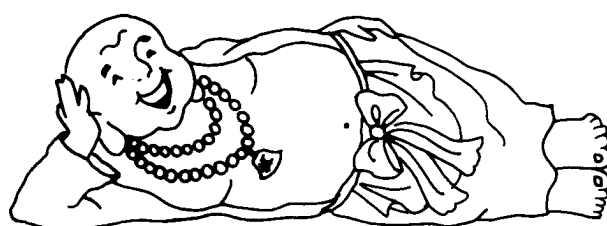
Life lived in unhealthy comparison breeds tension.

Yoga of Action

*Each moment is a wonder, each moment is full and complete.
Each moment is the song of the Divine.*



Contemplation



Hate pollutes the mind. Silence purifies it.

Chapter 30

Leading your being

It was sunset time. Beautiful clouds, in different forms, hovered in the sky. The ephemeral shapes of the clouds presented a magical splendour to the eyes. Each moment the shapes of the clouds were changing. Every change was a graceful movement, teaching humanity that changes could be grateful. The only thing consistent in life is change. Change is not death; change is a movement from births to birth; from splendour to splendour; mystery to mystery.

I felt that the dancing clouds were communicating something profound to me. They were living souls, giving me sermons from the beyond. They were telling me 'Don't keep the secrets of your heart to yourself. Share them with us; share them through your smiles, talk to us from your eyes and we will hear it with our hearts!'

The night was dark, the sky deep, the ashram reverberated with silence and the birds in their nests were asleep. The voice of the beyond was loud and clear adding to the stillness of silence. My eyes welled up with tears, wetting my smile and thus making me open out my heart to the beyond.

Managing change is an art of good leadership. To be successful in life, one has to have good leadership qualities. A good leader has a very important vision. The ordinary paradigm is 'whatever is good is mine.' Can we learn to awaken this energy of whatever is good within us irrespective of our culture, religion and nationality? If a leader can imbibe and digest this, he would be an inspiring individual.

In esoteric teaching there is an important law called the law of the three. The positive effort you put in is called the first force. As you put in positive force there is a negative force that would affect the positive force. This negative force is called the second force. If one continuously puts in positive effort, there would be a third force that would descend and transform the negative force into a positive force. This is called the law of three.

If you do not continue putting a positive force, then the negative force would take over. So the law of three says be open to the negative force but continue the positive effort.

Reflect on the following story.

A biological teacher asks students to observe a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly and not to touch it during the process. The teacher leaves the classroom after giving the instructions.

The students while observing the metamorphosis see the butterfly struggling to come out of the cocoon. Out of compassion they assist the butterfly in coming out of the cocoon. In the process the butterfly dies. The teacher comes back to the students 'Why did the butterfly die?'

They answered. 'We do not know. We only tried to help the butterfly emerge from the cocoon.'

The teacher said, 'You fools, the struggle of the butterfly while emerging from the cocoon strengthens its wings and bypassing this process you killed the butterfly.'

The moral of the story is struggles are not as based as we think them to be.

A good leader understands this law and however negative a force may exist he strives to be positive.

The second important factor that a leader should understand is the principle of the ladder.

According to this principle –

'Each one of us on the ladder of spiritual growth is on one rung or the other and therefore, if one has to go up the ladder of spiritual growth, not only should one help others climb but also not pull any other down.'

Just imagine a ladder on which each one fights to go up. On such a ladder, there would be chaos and not cosmos. Hence, Lord Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita says, 'Help each other to grow.'

Reflect on this story:

The Lord invited angels and demons for a dinner and said, "There will be divine food on the menu. Anyone who eats it would become immortal."

So both groups turned up the Lord's residence, for the dinner. The Lord thanked them for coming and said, "You can have the food but to attain immortality you should ensure that you do not bend your elbows at the elbows while you eat."

The demons tried their best to eat without bending their elbows and utterly failed. Cursing the Lord they went back. Angels did not have any problems. Each took a morsel of food and fed the other. Thus, mutually feeding each other, they attained immortality.

The third quality of a good leader is in learning the art of managing people. Andrew Carnegie said, "Take away my people, but leave my factories, and soon grass will grow on the factory floors. Take away my factories, but leave my people, and soon we will have a new and better factory."

In managing people one has to keep their hopes alive. One has to teach them to manage their disappointments. A good leader does not worry too much about his career but works on the careers of the others. When a successful man was asked what was his greatest asset he answered, 'I consider the ability to awaken the enthusiasm in my people as the greatest asset that I possess.'

To awaken people's enthusiasm is the greatest skill that a leader can possess. When Andrew Carnegie was asked about the secrets of his success he answered, "One should have the patience of a gold miner when working with people. To get a little gold you have to patiently remove a lot of dust."

Someone has stated beautifully, "There is a difference between a boss and a leader."

The boss pushes the subordinates; the leader inspires them.
The boss depends on authority; the leader on goodwill.
The boss says 'I' the leader says "WE."
The boss says 'You Go'; the leader says 'LET US GO.'

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

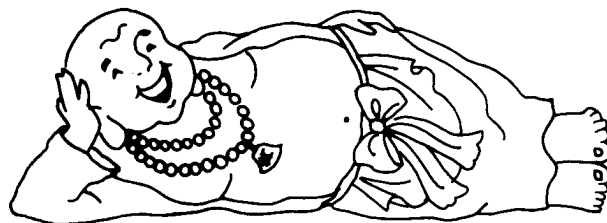
*Ordinary paradigm is, whatever is mine is good.
The extra – ordinary paradigm is, whatever is good is mine.*

Yoga of Action

*One should have the patience of a Gold Miner
While working with people. To get a little gold,
You have to patiently remove a lot of dust.*



Contemplation



Ordinary paradigm is 'mine is good.' Extraordinary paradigm is 'whatever is good can be mine.'

Struggles are not as bad as we make them out to be.

A selfish person cannot contribute to himself.

Opportunity exists... in gaps

I was sitting under the shade of a tree facing a vibrant stream. The birds perched on the nearby branches were busy and hovered all over. Squirrels moved up and down. A gentle breeze carried with it the fragrance of nature.

A middle aged man came to me and asked, 'I have a problem with my son; his self – esteem is very low. He is not able to get a job, this adds to his low esteem. I am tense. What shall I do?

Research done on successful people reveals that self – confidence is the most important factor in life. It can be easily understood by the stool model.

Just imagine a stool with four legs. If one of the legs is weak, the stool is weak. The four legs represent self – confidence, which have components as:

- Feeling good
- Taking responsibility
- Being accountable
- Developing skills

Feeling good involves, being authentic and not pretending. Our life is a struggle involving pretensions of what we are not and in the process we do not feel good.

Reflect on this.

A manager appeared to be busy on his phone and computer at the same time. Two persons sitting in front of him were vying for his attention. The manager pretended to be busy and did not have the time to even greet them. After a while, he sought the reasons for their coming. One of them said that he had come to repair his computer.

Why do we pretend? A pretending – self creates false images in us, which ultimately lowers our self – esteem. Self – esteem will improve if the pretending self is dropped.

Responsible children invariably possess good leadership qualities. It is the duty of parents to inculcate responsibility in their children and make them accountable. Such responsibility motivates them to develop new skills. This in turn builds self – confidence in them.

A research conducted on various successful people proved a fact – their success was not because of knowledge or family background, but because of their ability to see gaps in any given opportunity; just the way a creeper passes through plants and creates its own path for growth.

The ability to see gaps or potential and work on those gaps is the real skill in successful living. For example, even a concrete bridge, if constantly struck by a sparrow at a particular spot sufficient number of times, may collapse. This is a well – known law in Physics. So too, there are right gaps in any given situation.

Successful people adopt the right strategy at the right time in any given situation. Even in competition they do not create conflicts, but harmony. Successful people are able to see potential gaps in any particular business. Seeing these gaps and encashing on them, is a great skill. This is the secret behind successful people's strategy. For example, in a table, a common man cannot see gaps; but protons, neutrons, electrons are in motion. The table is an energy center and not sheer matter; there are gaps which only a scientist can see.

A politician asked a youngster, 'Why are you after the Guru?'

The youngster said, 'When I see my Guru's face, I know God exists.'

'What do you see when you look at my face?' asked the politician

'Even God can make mistakes,' replied the youngster.

Keep yourself alive; rejoice to see the miracle around. See the gaps which opportunity invites. Cash in on the richness of life and see the dance of life was my advice to the tense father.

Reflect on this.

When diamonds were first discovered in Africa, there was a mad chase. A man sold his farm, started searching for diamonds and in the process lost all his money. On the other hand, the person who bought his farm, discovered diamonds in that very farm itself and he became rich. Hence, this expression 'There are diamonds in your backyards.'

There are always diamonds of opportunity around us. Let us be alert to cash in on them.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

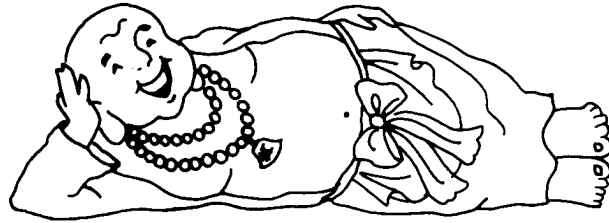
*There is a thin line dividing self – confidence
And over confidence; hence be watchful.*

Yoga of Action

*You must first be a believer,
If you have to be an accomplisher.*



Contemplation



Zeal without wisdom is like fire without light.

The golden key can open any door if you know how to be in harmony with what is.

There are diamonds of opportunities in your backyard.

Chapter 32 **Tools of communication**

At dawn, the pleasant sight of the ocean was soothing; the stillness around stirred in my heart an unfolding of the many mysteries of life. The more that I admire the wonders of the ocean, the fewer the words that find to express the experience in its totality. The effulgent rays of the rising sun spread around adding glory to the panoramic view of nature. It expressed itself on a magnificent canvas.

Our mind is like the ocean filled with inexplicable thoughts.

On the shore, crabs crawled all around as though they were chasing defined and undefined goals. Similarly our life is filled with multiple goals. How are we pursuing these goals? Are we stuck to the known methodology or are we willing to explore different avenues? As I observed the crabs crawling, I found answers without seeking them. An unknown force seemed to be guiding me.

A sense of gratitude engulfed my heart. I expressed the same by thanking Mother Earth who has given us the space to experience the wonders of life. We are blessed that we enjoy the beauty of the Ocean, the radiance and warmth of the Sun, the lustre and coolness of the Moon. Are we not privileged in receiving the bounties of nature without earning them?

In this overwhelming sense of gratitude I also felt deeply within me a sense of silence, which was intoxicating. This silence has truly been my friend and guide.

When I was engrossed in the admiration of nature's beauty, someone gently drew my attention: 'Oh! Master, I am lucky to meet you. I have read your books and heard many lectures. You are such a good communicator; you say one gets what one communicates. Unfortunately, I find myself a poor communicator. Can you please help me?'

Communication is an art. Art cannot be taught but it has to be caught. The best way to learn communication is to be with people who are good at it. Words can build bridges and walls as well. We have to learn to build bridges.

Very often we find that we have not learnt the art of using appropriate words and we land in trouble. But if one has mastered this art, one can easily overcome problems in communication.

Reflect on this story.

There was a debate between the Goddess of Fortune and God of Misfortune to settle who amongst them was beautiful. They decided to find out the same from a third person. They chose to meet a woman for an apt judgment. The woman they met was in a dilemma – if she were to judge the Goddess of Fortune as beautiful, then the God of Misfortune would invade her life and the other way round, the Goddess of Fortune could forsake her. She therefore asked for some time on the pretext that she had to say her prayers before the judgment, so as to invoke her God for assistance.

The woman said, 'Both of you re – enter my house and leave after a while.' The Goddess and God were puzzled... what a way to invite! They however, did what the woman wanted.

The woman gave her judgment. She said, 'The Goddess of Fortune appears more beautiful while entering the house and the God of Misfortune appears more beautiful while leaving the house.'

This statement is true and at the same time tactful. This is called linguistic intelligence.

The following points are important in the field of communication:

- Feel good about yourself.
- Do not be a victim to impress others; instead express yourself.
- Learn to avoid using 'I' and 'Me'; instead use 'You' and 'We'
- Learn to make the other person comfortable in your presence
- Practice – pause, pace, pitch and voice modulation while speaking.
- Learn to adopt emptying technique while convincing others.

Emptying technique involves asking questions in such a way as to empty the others while bringing out their likes and dislikes. This would give us a picture

of what the others wants, so that we can represent our communication in an accommodating climate.

He again said, 'I feel very uncomfortable when I socialize and I am at a loss while mingling with strangers.'

My advice to him was to practice the SOFTEN technique. While socializing, find out who among the strangers are Smiling Open body posture, Friendly energy, Touching while talking, Eye contact, Nodding in affirmation. Then, strike a conversation with those who have such qualities. Invariably you will feel comfortable with them.

According to Yoga, there are three types of logic in communication.

- Tarka – Just an empty logic without a context.
- Kutarka – Logic which always justifies and protects one's point of view.
- Vitarka – Logic which emphasizes having a break though and not focusing on a breakdown.

In communication, if one adopts Vitarka, the words would be empowering and not overpowering.

Whenever there is a conflict in relationship, learn to present your point of view; not thrust your point of view.

Let love be your center while communicating. You will understand the other better rather than feeling bitter.

Reflect on this story.

Mullah had a tiff with his wife. Outraged, he set out for fishing. He came with plenty of fish. His wife was happy. Mullah told his wife, 'There are lots of fishes in our village lake. The best way to get rid of anger is to go fishing.' She responded, 'The next time when you go out fishing, please mark the spot where there are plenty of fishes, so that I could catch them easily.'

The next day Mullah went to the spot and marked on his boat 'Fishes are here.'

When we are upset, our foolishness guides us like in the narration above.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

*The more arguments you win,
The less will you have friends.*

Yoga of Action

*The more you make others win arguments,
The more you will have friends.*



Chapter 33

Hurt... an invitation to grow

In the early morning, as the temple bells tolled, the leaves of the trees outside my room revelled in the morning breeze and their shadows danced on the walls of my ashram. A magnificent old tree, full of fruits and tender new leaves trees, full of fruits and tender new leaves invited me to its gracious presence. In such an atmosphere, my mind bubbling with dancing thoughts led me to insights of the beyond.

‘We believe in commitment, is it not dangerous? Is it not another name for slavery? We promise something that we know we cannot meet but wish it to be fulfilled. The next year also I would be the same, but who can foresee what next year would hold? Why can’t we trust our spontaneity? But why can’t we trust the intelligence of life and its movement? Is not commitment born out of this trust that life is a flow of intelligence?’

As these thoughts danced and played on my mind, a woman entered my room, bowed to me and asked, ‘Why do I get hurt so often? Should we accept hurt as part and parcel of life? Is hurt a part of my subconscious mind that I have not learnt to train? I am really weary of being hurt.’

Hurt has been my companion. My life flows moving from one bitter moment to another.’

I narrated and asked her to reflect on a story.

Buddha was walking with his disciples. A group of villagers came to Buddha and reprimanded him as a lot many youngsters had become his disciples. After patiently listening to them he said ‘My disciples in the next village are awaiting my discourse, so please allow me to go. On my return you can present whatever complaints you have against me.’ These words were uttered peacefully and with kindness.

The villagers were shocked and asked, ‘Are you not upset by our harsh words? You listen to our accusations as though we are complementing you?’

Buddha answered their question with a question, ‘As a monk I am not supposed to take food twice on any day. Suppose you are not aware of this and after treating me to a lunch, you also prepare dinner for me. You look forward to my compare at dinner and in turn, I don’t come. Would your food go waste?’

The villagers replied, 'No, we would distribute the meal prepared amongst ourselves.'

Buddha continued his reply, 'In the same way, whatever criticism you heaped on me, as I would not be carrying it, it would remain with all of you. Hence I am not hurt.'

Buddha silently along with his disciples, continued on his way. On the way he told his disciples 'I am feeling very hot.'

The disciples were shocked since it was a very cold day. He continued 'I am not talking of the external heat. I see in your minds there is so much seething anger at the way the villagers behaved. Instead of being compassionate you are all upset and it is that heat that I am sensing now.'

There are two types of actions.

- The actions of our body.
- The actions of our thoughts and feelings.

What impacts the quality of our life is the movement of thoughts and feelings. More than negative experiences it is the negative interpretations of the negative experiences that affect our life to a greater degree.

I told the lady that more than any situation it is the interpretation of the situation that would affect our life. One should be sensitive to this movement of thought.

In a program, I found a lady seated in the last row sleeping. Very gently I called her from the back to come to the front and sit down. I did not tell her that should not sleep during the session. Neither was I loud or harsh in my voice. I then continued my lecture. She was steaming innately like a pressure cooker. Gently looking at her I asked, 'It appears that you are upset by something.'

She replied in the affirmative.

I asked her, 'what is it that upsets you?'

She said, 'You insulted me.'

I told her 'I have merely summoned you from the back row to the front. Therefore where is the insult?'

Calling her from the back row to the front was a fact. What hurt her was not the fact but the interpretation of the fact that it was an insult. In the same workshop another lady got up and told me, 'Had you called me over from the back row to the front. I would have felt honoured.' The same situation viewed by two different people are two different experiences.

In another workshop an executive got up and asked me 'My boss had called me an idiot. The word definitely hurts me.'

I asked him, 'Are you an idiot?'

He answered, 'I have done my Ph.D.'

So I told him, 'So you are not an idiot and hence there is nothing to be hurt. Even if you are an idiot there would still be nothing to be hurt as it would be a statement of a fact.' More than facts what hurts us is the way we look at facts. If somebody looks at you wrongly it is the other person's problem and not yours. And hence you have to be compassionate to his wrong perceptions.

Finally I told this lady a hurt or upset mind, whether justified or not justified, is self-damaging.

So do not allow disturbing thoughts to control and ruin your life.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

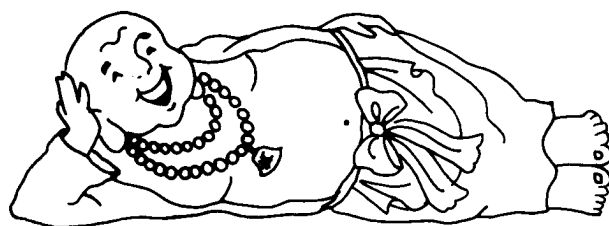
Difficulty gets people into trouble; But hurt keeps them there.

Yoga of Action

The main purpose of being spiritual is not Going to heaven, but to get heaven right here.



Contemplation



Gratitude for existence should be as regular as our heartbeats.

The greatest benediction is a true friend. So is good communication.

Among thorns grow roses. Among difficulties let love flower.

Hurt is hell's junkyard.

Chapter 34

The foolishness of jealousy

It was a cold and breezy morning. Musical waves from a nearby place filled the air. It was a pleasant day. A man with tears in his eyes. It was a pleasant day. A man with tears in his eyes, shared his feelings with me stating, 'I feel jealous about successful people. I am not able to enjoy my life. The virus of jealousy has invaded my life. I come from an unhappy home and I feel this must be the cause of my misery. How can I overcome this?'

There are certain aspects in life on which you have control and there are others on which you do not have control. But you have to live wisely. What does this involve? Wise living would include both the controllable and uncontrollable variables of life.

The fact is you come from an unhappy home. You have no choice on that. But you have a choice not be a victim of an unhappy home.

Reflect on this.

A father and his two sons lived in a single room. The father used to come home drunk and watch TV, disturbing his children's studies. The eldest son was committed and concentrated on his studies, while the younger son followed in the footsteps of his father. Both children grew up. The eldest son got an award for being the best citizen in the town while on the same day; the younger son was imprisoned for a petty crime.

When both were interviewed, the answers they gave were worth pondering. The younger son said, 'All because of my father who created a bad atmosphere at home.' The eldest son said, 'I attribute my success to my drunken father and the unhappy atmosphere; it was an inspiration for me to be different.'

The situation was the same but the response was different. More than the situation it is how we respond to the situation that determines the quantity of our life.

Jealousy exists when one has not learnt to rejoice in the success of the others. Jealousy also exists when there is an unwise comparison with the other.

Reflect on this story.

A man prays 'Oh! Lord, please fulfill my prayers. I will forever be grateful to you.' The Lord advises, 'Son, the more I fulfill your desires, the more you will be unhappy. Your being is in unhappiness. Focus on changing the state of your being and not on the fulfilling of your desires.'

But the man insists his desires be fulfilled. Instead of changing himself he tries to change the Lord.

The Lord answers, 'I will fulfill your desires but with one condition. Whatever you get, the whole city will get double of it.'

The man happily agreed. He prayed for a palatial house and next moment he found one. He was very happy. But it was momentary and vanished no sooner than he noticed two palatial houses in his neighbourhood. This led to anger and jealousy. He felt it was his effort that pleased the Lord, but the others reaped the rewards. He decided to teach them a lesson.

He prayed again, 'Oh! Lord, please remove one of my eyes.' Suddenly he found other had lost both the eyes. He felt very happy. The very next day he found the whole town had committed suicide. He experienced a sense of loneliness. The joy of making those whole town blind was short lived, as he had nobody to share his success with.

Jealousy is a sickening symptom of not enjoying life as it is.

Reflect on this.

Tagore had brought out his work a very interesting tale. A seeker, at a young age, set out in search of the Lord. He went all around, met thousands of people. Many years passed. He entered the Himalayan valley; the atmosphere was very inviting. He felt this could be the abode of the Lord.

As he went deeper he found a celestial cottage. Curiously he entered the cottage and found a board 'God resides here' written on it. At once his joy was unlimited as his search was coming to an end. When he was about to knock the door, an interesting soliloquy overpowered his mind. His mind said, 'I have enjoyed my search all these years. The enjoyment derived in searching would come to an end, the moment I meet the lord...'

Tagore adds an interesting twist to the story when the seeker turns back and gets lost.

The moral of the story is that if one can enjoy one's search and derive satisfaction from the very search itself, there is fulfilment. We have to teach ourselves to enjoy our search, our journey.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

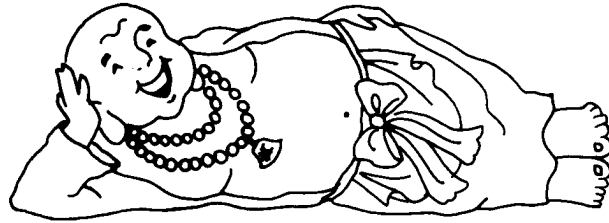
Jealousy is a jungle of comparison.

Yoga of Action

Jealousy punishes you More than the others.



Contemplation:



*There is joy in the very seeking itself.
If you are not joyous here and now, you never will be so anywhere else too.*

Chapter 35 **Journey to joy**

The day dawned with a cool breeze; the overnight rain had soaked the earth. The crimson rays of the rising sun pervaded all around. The birds were fluttering and chirping, singing a song of their own. Butterflies hovered rhythmically to the melodious song of the birds. It was a wonderful sight watching them dance. A bird invited me to its world of wonder and gave me a sermon without words.

Is not love a stranger in our lives? Is there not a hidden urge to overcome the separation from love? Why do people live like parallels? Should the differences between people be a point of attraction or distraction?

We think that the loved one is far away in separation. At a physical level we can be close to each other but cannot become ONE. At a spiritual level, we need not become one, but we are ONE. Unless we operate from the spiritual level.... ATMA or Soul, we will not be able to fulfil the ever longing desire to become ONE. This urge to become ONE, is by itself the greatest source of unhappiness.

I recall when a young man had asked me, 'Is it possible to be happy in this cut – throat world? It appears that only when we cheat others would we succeed. In distrust can one really be happy?'

An Indian maxim goes like this – 'However hard you search in the mouth of a crow, you will not find teeth.' Many of us search for happiness where it does not exist. The Bible says, 'The Kingdom of heaven is within you.'

The Gita says, 'Happiness is within.' We are in search of happiness not within but outside. We get lost in the unessential and forget the essentials... ourselves.

Reflect on this story.

A doctor visits a lady patient. The anxious husband waits outside. There the Doctor asks for a cork screw. The husband gives it to the doctor. Again, after a few minutes the doctor comes out of the room and asks for a screwdriver. The husband gives it. After a while doctor comes out again and asks for a chisel and hammer. Now the husband gets worried and asks the doctor, 'How is my wife?' The doctor replies, 'I have still not examined her; I am struggling to open my briefcase.'

Most of us are busy with the unessential of life and in the process miss the essential.

We are unhappy in life because we are victims of our expectations. We have to learn the art of going beyond our expectations.

Most of us ask, 'How can we live without expectations?'

My question is, 'Have expectations made our life easier or difficult?'

We suffer because of expectations. We do not trust our intelligence; but we trust our expectations.

Take the relationship between a husband and wife. There is disappointment when one spouse expects the other to be in a way that the other is not. My advice is, 'Have expectations; but let not your happiness depend on them. Operate from love – not expectations. Love provides caring energy. This energy will make you effective and happy.'

Reflect on this story.

There was a Zen master. He was fragile; but had a powerful presence. He was pushing down huge boulder's effortlessly. Someone asked him, 'What is the secret of your strength? Where does it come from?'

The Zen master replied, 'Before I push the boulder down, I communicate lovingly to them, request their permission and support in my effort to move them. And then I am able to move them miraculously...' The power comes from the mystery of love not from the expectation of others to behave the way we want them to.

Reflect on another story.

A carpenter from China, created a unique piece of furniture. It was a piece of art liked by many. When asked how he made it, the Carpenter replied, 'Before cutting a tree in the forest, I talk to it and takes its permission. Intuitively I understand from them which tree likes to be felled. Only then do I cut the tree.'

The furniture made out of such is tree, happens to be a piece of art.’ Love has a power; the power to create. It is the power we should learn to operate from.

If our expectations emerge from love, we become the masters of our expectations. Otherwise, we are slaves to them. Misery is not a product of a cut – throat world; it is a result of the expectations from a world bereft of love.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

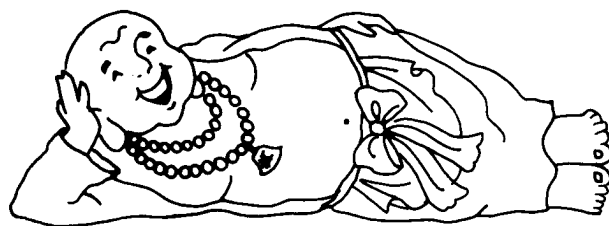
At a physical level we can be close to Each other, but cannot become one.

Yoga of Action

At a spiritual level we need to become one, but we are one.



Contemplation



Among the beautiful and great things that are to be discovered by us, the being of Nothingness leading to oneness is the greatest.

If your mind isn't polluted by unnecessary things, this is the best season of your life.

Chapter 36

From discouragement to encouragement

Throughout the world one can find people afflicted by the malady of depression. Such people consult psychologists and to their dismay, some of the psychologists themselves are on anti– depression therapies.

A pretty good looking girl goes to a psychologist. ‘I am in tension doctor...’ and before she completes her statement, the doctor hugs and kisses her.

‘Why did you do that? Retaliates the girl.

‘I have released my tension, now tell me about your tension,’ says the doctor.

A husband says. ‘I wonder why many people are depressed? I have provided everything to my wife and still she is depressed.’

I asked him, ‘You have given her everything but have you encouraged her or discouraged her?’ Emerson said, ‘Our primary want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can.’

Mahatma Gandhi motivated millions of people and encouraged them to come out of their limiting thoughts. He always saw goodness and divinity in people. He believed in the Bhagavad-Gita, which says ‘Human is Divine.’ Gandhi saw goodness in people, as though they were full of goodness and nothing else. What a way of looking and encouraging people!

I am reminded of an incident. A famous dancer was to perform in a concert; but she was not well on that day. The show was a sell out and people were anxiously waiting for the performance. The Anchor announced, ‘Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the performance. I have an announcement to make – it is bad as well as good. The bad news is – the famous dancer is unwell, so she cannot perform. The good news is – her student will dance instead.’

The spectators were obviously disappointed. The student dancer gave a wonderful performance. But no one applauded. Her little son came from the backstage and screamed, ‘Mummy, your performance was wonderful. Congratulations.’ The spectators were overwhelmed instantly and joined the little boy in applause.

Each one of us is a wonderful being. It is our centre. Encourage bringing forth the hidden ability and wonder in an individual. Then depression would disappear.

Telling other constantly that they are the dumps, useless, unintelligent, uncreative... only destroys the possibilities of their improvement. But if we were to employ the encouraging techniques and were generous in our praises, chances are that we would make others realize their potential. Let the vocabulary of encouragement be ‘You are a seed’ you are a possibility; you have infinite capacity,’ thus leading the other to a life of commitment and making the other’s dream a destination. Encouragement involves a little loving effort, which will result in a very big difference in the life of the other.

Reflect on this incident.

An old man was busy picking fish from the shore and throwing them back into the sea. A young man observed this and said ‘For the past two hours you are throwing fishes into the sea. But there are so many fishes around. Can you really make a difference to all of them?’

The old man smiled, picked up yet another fish, threw it in the sea and said, 'I have made a difference to this fish.'

Constantly encourage yourself and encourage others. Let this be your vision and mission. Passionately believe in them. Life will have a meaningful purpose. With such a purpose you will have no time to be depressed. The act of encouraging yourself and others will be a tremendous source of joy.

'But I am so insignificant. Can I make a difference to this world?' asked the man. I always say, 'What a little lamp can do, the great Sun cannot; can it shine in the night.'

Reflect on this incident.

The pilot while fling realized that he had lost direction. It was dark and difficult for him to land. The fuel was running out. There was a great danger. Suddenly he sighted a heavy truck on the highway; its head light beam helped him make out the path of the highway. Using the highway as a runway, he landed. He said to himself 'I am sure the truck driver would not have realized that the truck's headlight saved many lives.'

In the same way we may not know how we can contribute to others. What is important is our intention to contribute.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

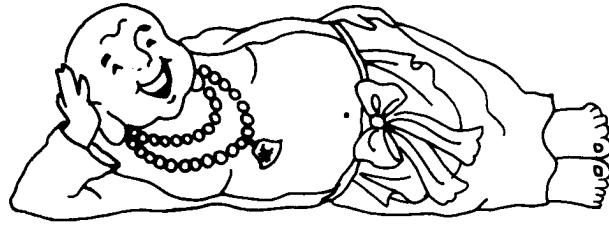
'Our primary want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can'
- Emerson

Yoga of Action

You need courage to employ Encouraging techniques.



Contemplation



Each one of us is a wonderful being.

Encourage yourself as well as others and experience the magic of life.

Chapter 37 Jokes to joy

Life can be a process of growing or aging. Growing involves adding life to one's years and aging involves adding years to one's life. Life is fulfilling only if life is a process of growing.

Reflect on this story.

Mother persuades her son to go to school. She says 'Oh! Son, are you not ready to go to school?'

Son says, 'Mummy nobody likes me at school.'

'But darling, you must go to school.'

'But the teachers don't like me at school,' said the son.

'But sweetheart you are 45 years old, and you are the Principle of the school. So you have to go to school.'

Just look – a 45 years old man, but psychologically still a kid. Very few people grow up in life; rest just grow old.

Growing up in life involves adding maturity and joy to every moment in life. Without contributing to the poetry of life, nobody can be happy. Many search for happiness but they fail to be creative and hence they can't be happy.

To be creative is a basic need in everyone. Hence, allow this force to emerge. My suggestion is, at least, start being creative by cracking jokes. When you crack a joke, more than the joke, the laughter that remains in your being is nourishing. Laughter creates a deep silence and in that silence, the problematic and serious mind would dissolve. Jokes work very interestingly..., you are saying something and there is an unexpected twist in your presentation. And that creates a new surprise, a new joy. The art of cracking a joke is a creative art.

Reflect on this example.

A 7 foot man was about to get married. His married friends gave him a piece of advice. They said, 'Right from the first day of marriage be strict with your wife or else she will be your master.' Following the advice of his friends, on the very first night he commanded his wife 'Do you know who I am? I am a wrestler, my father was a wrestler. Tomorrow, I expect hot water for my bath at 3 am or else...'

The wife was scared. She got up at 2.30 am and heated water for her husband.

This went on every day for ten years. Before retiring to bed he repeated 'Hot water for bath... at 3 am or else...'

The wife got fed up and one night when he repeated the same phrase she said 'Okay. Or else what will you do?'

'Or else... I will take a cold water bath,' said the husband.

When one develops a humorous attitude to life, one's childlike nature emerges. There is a child in us which wants to be free. As we grow older the child in us is suppressed and hence our playfulness also gets suppressed. Joy disappears when we have a serious attitude towards life.

One of the greatest secrets of life that has become a mystery is that, we are born with total bliss but still remain beggars. All because, we don't delve within ourselves. We don't know ourselves. Hence Socrates said 'Know Thyself.'

The Veda says "Know Thyself"

We take ourselves for granted. We think we know ourselves and this is most foolish. We become drunk with the indifference of who we are. And this kills the joy of living.

Reflect on the story:

An elderly man and a youngster both were drunk and having an interesting conversation in a bar.

'Where do you live?' asked the old man.

'I live in the Fifth Avenue,' replied the youngster.

'Oh! Even I live there and how is it that we have not met?'

'Where exactly do you live in the Fifth Avenue?' asked the old man.

'At Sterling Apartments', replied the youngster.

'Oh! Even I live there and how is it that we have not met?' asked the old man.

'How long have you been living there?'

‘For 25 years,’ replied the youngster.

‘Oh! Even I have been living there for almost 25 years and how is it that we have not met?’ asked the old man, ‘Which flat in Sterling Apartments?’

‘At B2... on the second floor,’ was the reply.

‘My God! Even I am living in the same flat and how is it that we have not met?’

Another man on the next table hearing this conversation was shocked. But the bartender said, ‘Sir, don’t get worked up. These two come here every night, have a few pages and indulge in the same conversation. And they are father and son!’

Many of us are indifferent to who we are. Vedas tell us we are like drunkards since we don’t know who we are.

Knowing oneself is just not seeing ourselves as ‘I am the body.’ The body is the periphery – ‘Me’. But the ‘I’ that is ‘self’ is not the periphery – ‘Me’ as my body. The deeper ‘Me’ is the soul which is beyond the body and mind. This can be discovered through understanding, reflection and meditation.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

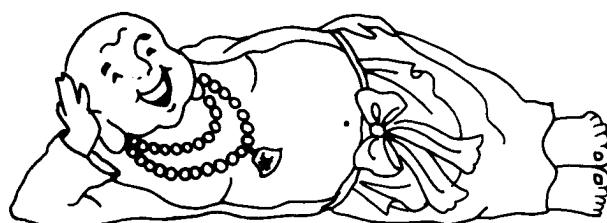
We are born with total bliss But still remain beggars.

Yoga of Action

You can understand a man not by the Company he keeps; but by the jokes he cracks.



Contemplation:



We are more interested in the meaning of Dreams than learning about things that we see when awake.

We are born with total joy but still remain Beggars of happiness throughout life.

Chapter 38

Suffering to surrender

One of the common questions people ask me is “How do we avoid suffering?” People are so focused in action, not realizing that an action which is born out of ignorance is an extension of ignorance. Hence, more than the action, one has to bring the light of understanding to one’s action.

My reply is, ‘Understand that you are the creator of your suffering. This understanding will help you dissolve suffering. An unhappy person in heaven, will convert heaven also into hell; the happy person will convert the hell into heaven.’ So, the change is not anywhere except within oneself.

Reflect on this.

A Prime Minister and his secretary visit a palace in England. The Prime Minister detects a foul smell and out of anger tells his secretary ‘Your socks stink. Can’t you wear clean ones? We are meeting the King. Tomorrow come with a clean pair of socks.’

The next day too, while the secretary is with the Prime Minister, he encounters foul smell.

Again, in anger, he thunders. ‘You are stinking.’

The secretary immediately says, ‘I have worn a new pair of socks today, here is the bill for it. And since you don’t trust me I have carried the old socks in my pocket to show them to you.’

The stinking pair of socks is like our unhappy mind. If you have an unhappy mind, even if you are in heaven, you will stink. So, to overcome suffering, you have to understand that your unhappy mind is the cause.

There are two types of sufferings.

- Legitimate
- Illegitimate

Legitimate suffering is a sorrow proportionate to the situation. For example your son dies in an accident. This sorrow is valid. But if you continue worrying for more than one or two years, then there is a psychological aspect to it.

To handle legitimate sufferings, one should understand such a suffering is the result of your past Karma... past deeds.

Illegitimate suffering is a suffering not proportionate to the situation. For example, somebody calls you foolish. You go on playing this thought in your mind even after many days. It is this suffering that one can end through right thinking. When your suffering is due to the past Karma... past deeds, you have to understand that you are only repaying your debt.

Reflect on this story.

Many people had gathered in a village to hear the sermon from Lord Buddha. Buddha did not start his sermon; he was waiting for someone to turn up. After a couple of hours, a young maid servant arrived and joined the gathering. Buddha began his sermon.

Someone asked, 'Why did you wait for her?'

Lord Buddha said, 'In my previous birth, I had promised her that after my enlightenment I would teach her. And hence I had to wait for her to clear the debt.'

A man was very unhappy. His friend had not returned the borrowed money.

One of my students told him, 'Your money is deposited somewhere in existence and at the right time, it will come.'

Such an understanding makes us surrender our sufferings to the mystery of life. Surrender is a leap from the ordinary mind to the sacred mind; logical mind to the cosmic mind.

Surrender is like opening the third eye... dropping that I am separate from the whole.

Surrender is real growth.

Growth has no sufferings. Resistance to suffering creates suffering. For example, if a stone is thrown on the wall it makes a noise. But if a stone is thrown in empty space it just passes through. Wall is like the ego. When somebody says something unpleasant, and you have a wall of ego, you get hurt. If you are empty then the word will just pass through with no resistance. Such is in the belief that God gives me what I need more than what I want.

Surrender is trust. Surrender is being fluid to life.

Very often we suffer because we are not open to the vastness of life. We are bound by our knowledge. We are dead to something, which is beyond our knowledge. What we know is finite and what we do not know is infinite. To be alive and limited to what we know and dead to what we do not know is a deep cause for suffering.

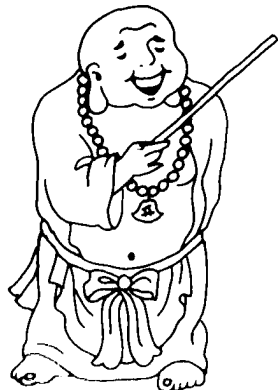
Reflection:

Yoga of Wisdom:

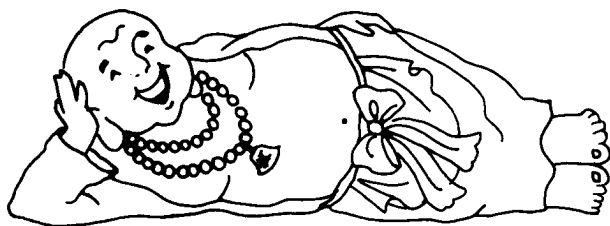
Understanding you are the creator of your Own suffering will help you dissolve suffering.

Yoga of Action:

So often, we suffer because we are not Open to the vastness of life.



Contemplation:



The wise adopt a method of living life from one miracle to another.

God gives me more of what I need than what I want.

Chapter 39

Success and failure – the polarities of life

One has to go beyond one's personal will and only then can one be attuned to the divine will.

Because of our personal will, we grapple with the cosmic will. In this fight we become like rocks and lose the inner softness of our beings. With this rock like presence, any amount of sermon will be like throwing seeds on infertile soil. One can win only with the whole, not against the whole.

A successful man, walking very elegantly, approached me once and said, 'I am successful and still feel unfilled, I experience an inner void. Success has not really brought cheer to my life. Neither do I want failure. I am unhappy, but others see me as a happy individual and that is the only happiness I have. That happiness is more like a dress on me; but not the real me. Therefore, how do I face success and failure as well?'

The love to serve people will allow another force to flow in us. This force will make us feel that we are instruments or channels to help others. It is said in Hassidism 'When God gives something he doesn't give to you but through you.'

There is an interesting insight in the esoteric teachings – ‘The Law of Pendulum.’ It states how a pendulum swings from one point to another, life is a swing of opposite; success and failure, pain and pleasure... but what is important is to be centred... being calm...

Be centered in both success and failure. What does it mean? When your pendulum swings to success, the natural force is to be dragged to the other end which means either you will have greed for more success or the fear of failure. When the pendulum swings to failure, the natural pull will be to worry about failure or greed for success.

If one is not blown around by these ordinary energies and is centered... being calm, then one would experience another sacred force, which would make one see the beauty of both success and failure. We would understand the meaning of being centered, which generates calmness in us. This calmness is neither the result of success nor can it be snatched by failure.

Let our center not be energized by greed, worry...

This man’s presence triggers my memory of a student, who asked me this question. ‘I love your workshop. Lot of people ask questions on interpersonal relationships; on how to be winners; on how to go about setting goals; on how to deal with stress... but my question is a spiritual worry... who was I in my previous birth? I am sure you know of a Buddhist technique which helps us go to our previous birth. Is it true?’

Yes. I do make attempts to find answers about previous births.

‘Please tell me who was I in my previous birth. This ignorance makes me miserable.’ Said the man.

Why do you want to know about your previous birth? You have enough to know about the present birth. Why burden yourself with the past or the future? But the man persisted.

I told him that I would teach him the technique and stated that in his previous birth he could have been a rat. Having known that it would become extremely difficult to kill one, fearing it could be his great grandchild. Neither could he be comfortable with it.

Why do we complicate life? Life is simple, but we have complicated questions. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, ‘Forget fullness is also my glory.’ Nature in this infinite wisdom has given us the gift of not remembering the previous births. Please respect it.

Oh, Life Relax Please!

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

To be centered is to even love your Enemies – it will drive them crazy.

Yoga of Action

Greed to be somebody and fear of being Nobody is the real failure.



Chapter 40 **Decision leading to destination – 1**

A young couple asked, ‘We have been married for several years but the only thing common between us are our differences. We are not able to make decisions; our decisiveness is our common point. We don’t smile at each other. What do we do?’

Few days back a man asked, ‘We are full of contradictions and so I am angry and upset with the contradictions of life.’

Life is not small as to put it into compartments of good and bad, right and wrong, evil and noble. Life is vast. So big that it includes and contain contradictions. In India, the symbol of Kali explains this point very beautifully. She is shown dancing on the chest of her husband i.e., Lord Shiva. She loves her husband and at the same time dances on his chest almost killing him. Life is full of contradictions. One has to gracefully accept them and at the same time change whatever is possible. We also have to learn to accept what cannot be changed.

The context of a relationship should be one of love and not of exception. Love has to go through transformation and purification. Only then, would we find that we are bigger than our differences and not slaves to differences.

But how?

By understanding what is life without differences.

Differences add richness to life, variety of life, spice of life. One should be creative in a relationship. Like in a music concert there would be different musical instruments but all of them are harmonized to create symphony. Exactly in the same way, you are different, your husband is different – like musical instruments but still you can create music in life.

Learn to enjoy the differences. By hoping that only when differences are dissolved, we will be happy; we will be happy; we will only be hopping from one hope to another!

Reflect on this.

Mullah Nazruddin was traveling on a train. The ticket collector asked for his ticket. Mullah was anxious and upset as he could not find the ticket tucked in his right pocket. When the ticket collector asked 'Why don't you search your right pocket?'

Mullah answered 'That is my last hope and if it is not there I will be more miserable.'

Man lives in hopes and misses the beauty of elegance of what is.

Respect your differences, enjoy your differences and learn to creatively flow with the differences; treat the handling of differences as a game. Make this wise decision.

Reflect on this.

A bus driver was upset. The traffic chaos was the cause. He murmured to me, 'Why can't people flow rules? By not following the rules, they create tension in me, hence, my blood pressure rises.'

I asked him 'Do you play any game?'

He said 'Yes I play football.'

'when your opponent takes away the ball, you don't get depressed. Instead, you get motivated to play better than your opponent. I told him to treat traffic like a football game and enjoy others breaking rules. Treat it like a game, have fun with it. Then your work will become enjoyable.'

Transform this decision into destination

Life is an opportunity, cash on it
Life is an adventure, get into it
Life is a tragedy, grow from it
Life is a struggle, make it sacred
Life is a song, sing it
Life is a promise, meet it
Life is a game, play it
Life is a duty, fulfill it
Life is a challenge, encounter it
Life is a dream, realize it
Life is beauty, feel it Life is bliss, experience it.

Reflection:

Yoga of Wisdom:

Life is not so small as to be put into Compartments of good and bad, right and wrong,

Ugly and beautiful. Life is so vast That it includes contradictions.

Yoga of Action:

Man lives in hope and misses the beauty and elegance of what is.



Chapter 41

Decision leading to destination – 2

The most important aspect in a relationship is that we should stand for transformation and growth. Transformation involves de – hypnotizing ourselves. We are hypnotized into believing that only if there are no differences can we love each other. Differences add richness of life. The only thing one should be alert to is that differences should not be based on the ego; but on inner growth.

We can either operate from personality or innocence. Personality comes from the ego while innocence comes from a childlike nature.

Whenever one operates from the ego, one is negative which creates a subtle substance in us and that's why we feel heavy. Whenever one operates from innocence i.e., childlike nature, one creates a subtle substance, which creates lightness. That is why when we are happy, we feel light.

When we are happy, pure and operate from innocence our logic would have a different luster, our understanding would have a different aura. It becomes divine. On the contrary when we are impure and unhappy, our logic would be dull and dry.

Hence in the Indian system of logic it is said that when a foolish person learns logic, logic becomes foolish.

Reflect on this

A student asked, 'Professor I want to learn logic.'

'It is simple, I will teach you,' said the professor. 'Do you like fish?'

‘Yes I love fish.’

‘Then I am sure you like water.’

‘What logic is this?’

‘Since you like fish and fish like water, therefore, you like water.’

Continuing further, ‘You like everybody’ said the professor.

‘What logic is this?’

‘You like fish, fish like water and everybody likes water. Therefore, you like everybody.’

Hence, you are not a homosexual.’

The student having a glimpse of logic happily left the classroom, met his friends and asked,

‘Can I teach you logic?’

The friend said, ‘Go ahead.’

‘Do you like fish?’

‘No’ he said, being a vegetarian.

‘Then you are homosexual,’ was his answer.

When a foolish person learns logic, logic becomes foolish.

Every moment involves decision making. If we don’t decide, then we have decided to be indecisive.

The greatest decision one has to make is the decision to be good, happy and helpful to humanity.

One should understand, even in an organization it is important to take healthy decisions and create good discipline. This adds to the organization culture.

Reflect on this famous example on Management.

Assume in a room, there are five monkeys. A bunch of fruits is hung from the ceiling. A ladder is provided to reach the fruits. The ladder is charged with electric current.

As the monkeys try to climb the ladder to reach the fruits, they experience shock. The monkeys distance themselves from the ladder. Later the electric current charge on the ladder is removed.

One of the monkeys is replaced with a new monkey. The new monkey would try to climb the ladder but would be attacked and prevented by the remaining monkeys. The new monkey would wonder why it was being attacked when enough fruits were available for all the monkeys.

Even if we replace another old monkey with a new monkey, a similar scenario will repeat. If this method is continued till all the monkeys are replaced with new monkeys, all the five new monkeys would stay away out of fear that if any of them climb the ladder they would be attacked.

This example reflects how a company culture is formed – an unwise decision leads to madness.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

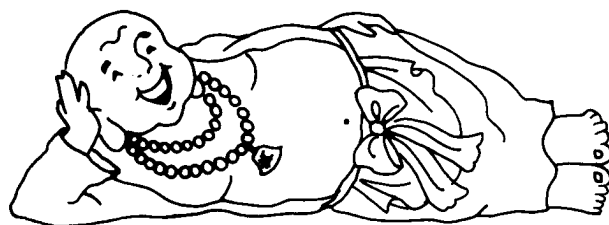
Every moment is a moment of decision making. Even in indecision, there is a decision.

Yoga of Action

Troubles and weeds thrive on Lack of wise decision.



Contemplation



When God gives something he doesn't give to you but through you.

Life is so vast that it contains Contradictions.

Treat life as a game, have fun with it.

He who swims in the pond of foolish logic will sink in the cesspool of sorrow.

Living in freedom – an enquiry – 1

One of my students asked, ‘When someone close to me dies, I am extremely sad, upset and insecure? I am scared of death. I want to know more about death. The concept of death haunts me. Is there life after death?’

I told her to ask more about life. I have a rich experience of life and how to add vitality to life. If you want to know about death, you must go to people who are dead or you can meet me after my death. But as long as I am alive, please ask me about life. To know about life is more important than to know about death.

Freedom is not absence of bondage but in spite of the bondage, if freedom is absence of bondage, then freedom is bound by bondage. It is free in freedom, not in bondage. Freedom is being free in freedom and in bondage – with this understanding, one will experience life is rich and fulfilling; death comes dancing to a wise person.

Reflect on this

It was a cold winter night. A monk went to a monastery seeking shelter. The host allowed him to stay; but to his surprise, he found the monk burning a statue of Buddha made out of wood to keep himself warm. The host retorted angrily, ‘Are you mad? Why are you burning a statue of our Lord?’ The monk answered, ‘The Buddha in me is feeling cold.’

The host on hearing this, drove him out of the monastery. After a few minutes, he observed that the monk was also worshipping a milestone outside the monastery. Out of curiosity, the host told him, ‘Are you crazy; a while ago, you were burning of Lord Buddha and now you are worshipping a mile stone?’

The monk answered, ‘The Buddha in me feels like worshipping.’

An enlightened being is an expression of intelligence, which cannot be understood through dry knowledge.

Let our focus be enriching life rather than worrying about death. An enlightened approach is understanding the present rather than worrying about the past or the future.

Reflect on this anecdote.

A student: ‘Teach me about enlightenment; tell me all that you know about enlightenment.’

The master: ‘Before I teach you, you have to undergo a process – you have to go around the monastery five times, wait for about two months and then I will teach you.’

‘Can you assure me that both of us will be alive until that time?’

‘I can’t assure you; death can happen at any moment.’

‘So the only moment is now; hence, teach me now.’

This should be the passion and commitment to know about life, now and at this very moment; not just an inquisitive urge to know about life.

A fragmented mind constantly worries about the past or fantasies about the future; thereby missing the present. But a mind which has lived life in totality will experience and trust an insight ‘When one door closes, another door opens.’

Reflect on this.

When a child is in the mother’s womb, it is secure and comfortable. After birth, the child grows up and seeks that experience of comfort in the materialistic world.

At the time of birth, a child goes through an experience of death. The child feels it is going to die; hence it cries. Now, is this birth or death? For a mother, it is birth of her child, whereas for the child it feels like death from its secure and comforting feeling prevalent in the mother’s womb.

Birth and death are nothing but one door closing and another door opening.

Now let us come back to the question of why we are afraid of death. It is because we have not lived life in its totality. Who is afraid of an examination? One who has not prepared well for the examination. Who is afraid of death? One who has not lived life totally in the present?

Why are we not able to live life totally in the present?

Our minds are victims of a perfect life according to our definition. This definition doesn’t allow us to be totally in the present.

My advice is to drop this definition of a perfect life, see elegance in the world of here and now, see the beauty of the imperfection of here and now. Then you will be busy rejoicing here and now.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

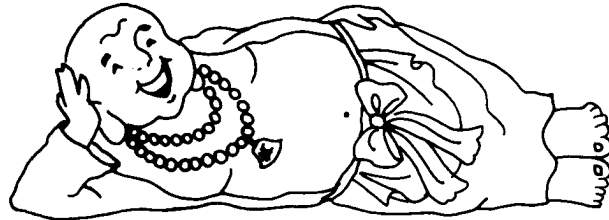
*Death comes dancing to a wise – man; He knows death is not a full stop,
But a comma in the sentence of life.*

Yoga of Action

Birth and death are nothing but one door Closing and another door opening.



Contemplation:



Death is but a full stop but a comma in the sentence of life.

Every moment is of one door closing and another opening.

Chapter 43 **Living in freedom – an enquiry – 2**

One should perceive the beauty in what is, rather than being hijacked by our concept of what beauty should be. Only then will we appreciate a piece of art.

Reflect on this.

A king learnt the art of Zen gardening. Gardening, according to Zen is a form of prayer and meditation. The Zen master who taught the art to the King, wanted to see his garden. The King, knowing the visit of his master, made sure to keep the garden in a perfect condition. The master went through the garden to his surprise, found not even one dry leaf in the whole garden.

The master asked the student, ‘Where are the dry leaves? What is a garden without dry leaves?’

Life has perfection and imperfection – let this be your vision of life. Let the beauty be inclusive rather than exclusive. Love is always exclusive. Lust is exclusive. Love should be the foundation of one’s life.

We will appreciate the beauty of life only if our vision of beauty is inclusive rather than exclusive. When we have the clarity, even when a husband bugs, a wife nags or a boss dominates, we start seeing beauty in their expression. This is called *Soundarya Lahari*... the world comprises nothing but waves of beauty. This is a very beautiful Indian expression.

Not through discourse, but through enquiry I make people realize how they are entrapped in self – made bondages and thereby have self – defeating attitudes.

One of the entrapments is the lust for power. We see struggle for power, be it in organizations or even in spiritual institutions. Our point of view is more important than the truth; our point of view is more important than the well being of the organization – why is it so?

This is because of a wrong interpretation of life. More than negative experiences, it is the negative interpretation of the negative experiences, which makes our life miserable. This misery makes us feel empty. To fill this void, we play many foolish games. One of the games is, the game for power. This is very unfulfilling. The greed for power makes one more empty to void. Don't run after illusions. Do not run after a mirage for it will not quench your thirst.

Reflect on this Sufi story.

There was a noise on the roof top, which disturbed the King in the middle of the night. He found a man searching for something. 'What are you searching for?' Asked the King.

'I am looking for my camel,' answered the man and went away. The King could not sleep the rest of the night; even though the man's words were foolish, his presence, his being, his aura was powerful. The King was lost in deep thought about the man.

Next day he overheard a conversation; 'Allow me to stay in this hotel.' The gatekeeper said, 'This is a palace, not a hotel.'

Curiously the King looked at the man enquiring and to his surprise found the same person who he saw on the previous night.

'What do you want; what are you saying?' asked the King.

'Where is your grandfather?' asked the man.

'He stayed in this palace and now he is no more.'

'What about your father?'

'He stayed in the same palace; but now he is also dead.'

'So they had stayed here and have gone; hence, is this not a hotel?'

Our real home is in an enlightened approach towards life.

Happiness lies in our choosing the right approach; so that our life will not be bitter; but better.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

More than the negative experience, it is Negative interpretation of the negative Experiences which makes life miserable.

Yoga of Action

Let enlightenment be your home.



Chapter 44 **Let your mistakes make you rich**

A student expressed his gratitude and said, ‘I learnt from you that mistakes cannot be avoided, but we should learn and become rich by them and not poor. Unless we teach ourselves to fail wisely, we cannot succeed in life gracefully. In fact, this one teaching has made me ready to do anything for you.’

I told him to reflect on this story.

Buddha taught humanity to be grateful. We should not be bound by our gratitude. Our gratitude should free us; not blind us.

Four people were carrying a boat on their head. Someone asked them why they were carrying it. They said ‘We are grateful to the boat that it has helped us cross the river. Our gratitude does not allow to abandon the boat.’

Religion should set us free and not blind us. Many people use religion to bind people and kill the spirit of religion.

Reflect on another story.

A man fell into a well and luckily did not drown, as the well was not full of water. He cried out for help. A passer – by readily came to help him. He was a Buddhist monk. The monk, instead of helping him, advised, ‘Buddha’s last sermon was, we should be a light unto ourselves; since you are not, you have fallen. If I say you, the darkness in you will make you fall again into the well; so create light within and that light will help you to come out.’ Thus he went away without helping.

A little later, a Hindu monk passed – by, heard the cry for help. He gave a sermon, ‘It is because of your Karma – past deeds – you have fallen. Even if I help you, your Karma will make you fall again. Do a noble act and earn good Karma. Good deeds will help you come out.’ He walked away without helping.

A disciple of Confucius saw the man in distress. He assured him, 'I will definitely help, but I will go and tell the village authorities how important is the teaching of Confucius. Confucius always taught society is more important than individual. Meanwhile, you go on screaming; so that you set a precedent for others not to fall. Then the village authorities will ensure every well is covered properly.' He too went away.

A Christian father happened to come next. He immediately helped the man out of the well. Then he made a request, 'Any time you fall into a well, please call only me and no one else. Not only you should fall but ask others also to fall. I will definitely come and help; thus doing good service to you all, I can go to heaven.'

Even in serving others, selfishness surfaces.

Can we serve without being selfish? This is the spirit of religion.

Prayer without service is not a prayer; Service without prayer is not a service.

True prayer and sincere service are the two wings of spirituality.

In the southern part of India, people love to plant coconut trees. There is a saying, 'Water the plant for five years, reap coconuts for life.'

Do good deeds, have trust and patience; the higher center will open up in you and you will witness a miracle of life. Like when a cup is placed upside down, even if it rains, the cup will not fill up. But when the cup is kept properly, it can fill up.

You can really serve others only when you have compassion in your heart. A heart without compassion cannot serve.

Reflect on this.

There was an enlightened monk and he was an embodiment of goodness. His disciple could not understand one thing about him. He used to rob, get intentionally caught and go to jail. On being released, he used to repeat the same.

When some of them asked him why he did that, he used to say, 'I have no other way to enter the jail, as the prisoners need my teaching.'

Compassion has its own logic.

Let compassion, service, goodness be your living Gods. God does not exist in temples, churches, mosques... God is in fact Godliness – it is love, goodness and service. In the name of service, do not forget yourself. In the cause of yourself, do not forget others.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

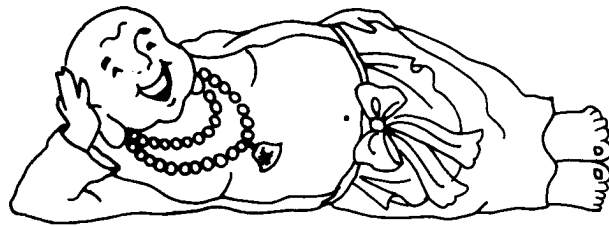
In the name of service do not forget yourself And in the cause of yourself do not forget others.

Yoga of Action

Prayer without service is no prayer. Service without prayer is no service.



Contemplation:



Enlightenment is our real home.

Religion is a wakeup call.

People and situations are god's mechanism to wake you up.

Chapter 45

Yoga – A journey to the higher self

A monkey, which leaves the tree and swims in a lake, is inferior to fish. A racehorse kept in a beautiful and posh apartment, is inferior to a rat. A good swordsman given a plough to cultivate a piece of land, is inferior to a peasant. In the same way people feel inferior, if they are not awakened to a higher self.

I am uncomfortable talking to people, I feel shy, I can't mix with people, I feel diffident in getting jobs done from others, I am an introvert. How can you help me?' a lady asked.

The art of living is about balancing. We have to balance our work, home, day and mind. We should balance being outer winners and inner winners.

Reflect on this.

A woodcutter was toiling to earn two meals a day. He met a monk. The monk advised him, 'Drop being at the edge of the forest and go into the forest. Your daily hours of work will fetch you one – month's food.'

The woodcutter followed the advice. Deep within the forest, he found sandal wood trees. He was very happy. He expressed his gratitude to the monk for having guided him.

The monk advised again, 'Take the risk of going still deeper into the forest. A day's work will fetch you food for six months. Fortunately, this also turned to be true; for he found a silver mine. He thanked the monk again, profusely. The monk further advised, 'If you trust me and go further deeper into the forest, a day's work will make you earn enough to fetch your food for a life time.' This also turned out to be true' for he found a gold mine.

The woodcutter wondered, 'Why then does the monk still stay at the edge of the forest and not venture into the forest, as he has been advising me?' He expressed his doubts to the monk. The monk replied, 'If you want to be externally happy, sit under this tree and I will teach you to go within. Then you will be externally happy.'

To be an outer winner, one has to explore the outside world. To be an inner winner, one has to go within oneself. The kingdom of heaven is within us.

One should balance being an outer and inner winner. Only then would one feel good.

Why are you shy? This is because you are not feeling good. You are more caught up in looking good. When you are not feeling good and do a good act it may still land you in trouble.

Reflect on this.

A woman noticed a boy jumping to reach the doorbell. She helped him to ring the doorbell and smiled 'Is your attempt now successful?'

'Yes; but now run and vanish before the door opens!' said the boy and ran.

You say you are uncomfortable being with people. This is may be due to lack of people skills. You should help people to bring out their best and that is possible if your best comes out.

Your best comes out if you balance being an outer and inner winner. Learn to motivate yourself and others. Learn to be at peace with the imperfection in yourself and others.

One important aspect that has helped me in dealing with people is this value. The value of receiving complaints wisely. The more I listen to people's complaints more it appears that there are hidden agendas behind the plethora of complaints.

Understand shyness is another form of ego. Don't support it. Just as you reject poisonous food, reject the ego games of your mind. Then you will see the truth of what is and not illusions.

Reflect on this

A woodpecker was pecking an oak tree. A lightning struck the tree and felled it. The woodpecker flew away and boasted, 'I never knew I was so strong; I could make a tree fall.'

Drop your ego. You will find people as God's messengers conveying divine messages to you; teaching you through their mistakes and successes.

Most of us are like an oak tree in a flowerpot. The flowerpot is like the ego and our being is like the oak tree. Do not limit yourself to the ego. Drip your lower self and let your higher self-guide you. This is the meaning of yoga; being yoked to the higher self.

Reflection

Yoga of Wisdom

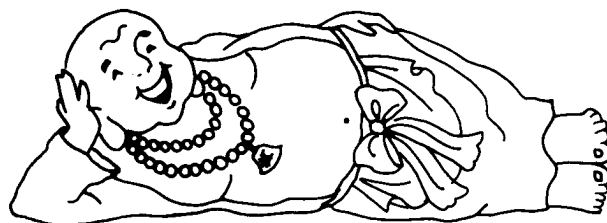
Most of us are like an Oak tree In a flower pot.

Yoga of Action

God is sending messages Through our failures.



Contemplation



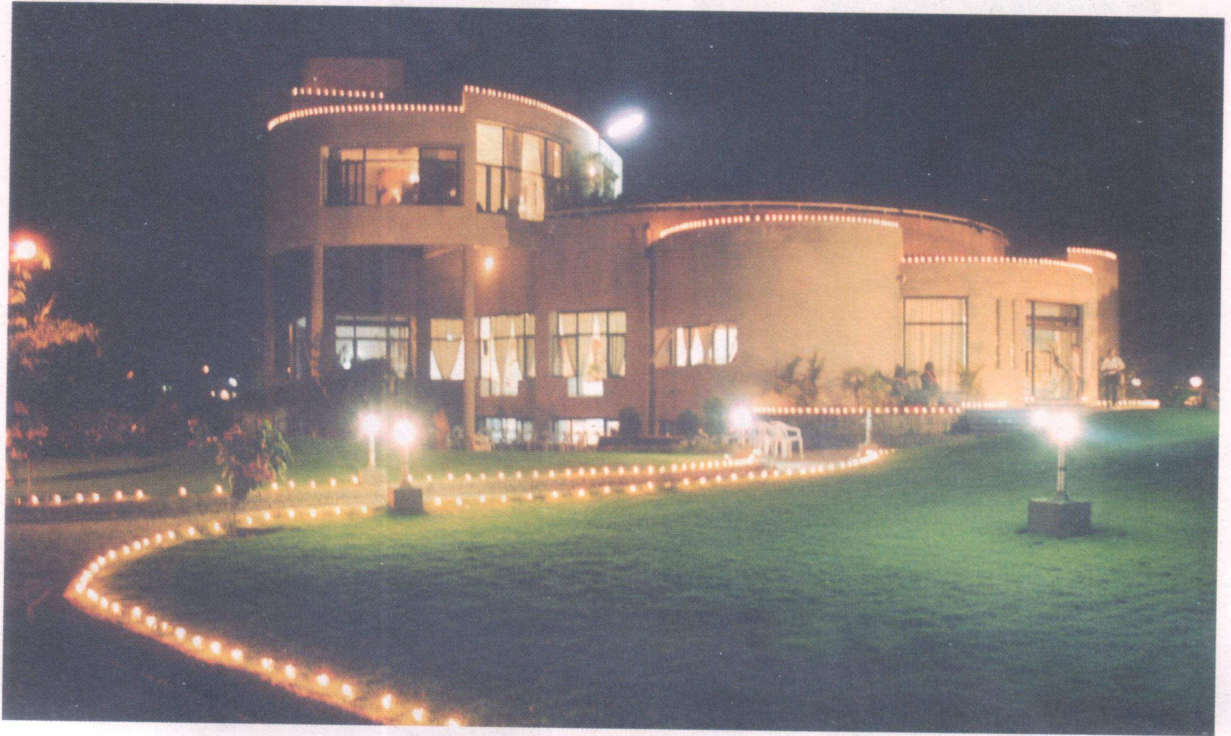
Religion should set us free and not bind us.

Seize from every moment its unique novelty and contribute to it.

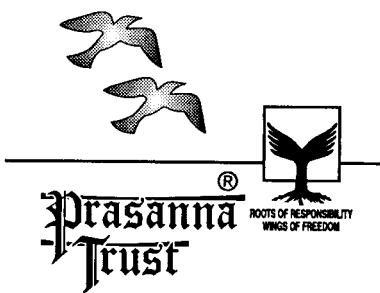


A section of large crowd during Gita Talks by Swamiji





A view of Nirguna Mandir at Bangalore



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Prasanna Trust is a registered social charitable trust set up with the objective to re-look at various facets of Indian philosophy and culture for effective transformation of individuals in particular and the society in general.

We have made our presence primarily through:

- Transformative Education
- Social Oriented Service

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It is a 2 days' workshop on personal effectiveness through interactions and meditations. An experience oriented, non-religious program designed to enhance productivity, handling stress, personal wellbeing and organizational synergy. It focuses on bringing forth the outer winner leading to creativity and an inner winner to meditative consciousness.

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d) YOUTH PROGRAMME

It is a 3 days program based on multiple intelligence. The program develops the hidden talent and skill in a child; to enable the child to face the world with confidence as each child is unique.

e) OH, MIND RELAX PLEASE!

It is a 1 day seminar based on unique techniques to transform from ordinary to extra-ordinary dealing with fear and conflicts and converting them as challenges...

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j) NIRGUNA MANDIR --A Meditation Centre for

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We seek support of individuals, business houses, institutions and invite them to be part of this noble vision of creating an atmosphere to impart our culture and thus contributing to the society we build.

Contribution to Prasanna Trust account is exempted from Income Tax under Section 80 (G)

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(also in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam)

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•Swami Sukhabodhananda is the founder Chairman of Prasanna Trust. He is also the founder of the research wing of Prasanna Foundation, which focuses on the scientific aspects of meditation.

His several books have made many discover a new way of living life. He makes you realise that if one door closes another door opens. Life is an opening.

He is a regular invitee to various forums in India, USA, UK, and Switzerland.

He has been addressing many gatherings at important Universities in India and abroad.

Leading industrial houses invite him to conduct 'In house workshops' for their executives.

His self-development programs have benefited many in the corporate sectors of reputed institutions like banking, finance, industry, education, armed forces and police.

Times of India in their recent poll on 'who talks the best' places Swamiji as the one, who tops the list on all counts as the best speaker.

The Week magazine acclaims Swamiji as one among the top five best exponent of spirituality knowledge.

Swamiji's English books 'Oh, Mind Relax Please!' and 'Oh, Life Relax Please!' are the top best sellers in the country and has set a new bench mark in the lives of many... from the Kargil hero Gen. V. R Malik who swear by the inspiring content of the book to New York Mayor who acknowledges its usefulness to diminish work pressure and dealing with New York City press!

His other English books are marching best sellers.

Swamiji's book 'Manase Relax Please' has set an all-time sales record in the history of Tamil, Kannada & Telugu books and has been included as a part of curriculum in some of the schools & colleges. Leading personalities have termed that he has revolutionized Tamil literature through his books.

Swamiji was invited as a dignitary in five different panels at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and was a special invitee to the United Nation World Millennium Summit of spiritual Leaders.

Swamiji is the only Hindu monk who was invited to participate in the program 'Eye on India' showcasing the country by CNN.

Swamiji's works in audio and video have been transforming the lives of many through Sa Re Ga Ma and Times Music.

His message on the Aastha, Gemini, Sadhana, DD Chandana, World Space Radio and many other Channels is reaching a wide spectrum of people both in India and Overseas.



Shri Amitabh Bachchan, BBC Star of the Millennium releasing the book

What makes this book unique?

It covers the overall needs of individuals. Each chapter is comprehensive in its message.

What are the overall needs of individuals?

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Swamiji's message is of practical relevance to an individual whether at the office desk, board room or living room

Ms. Indu Jain
Chairman
Times of India Group

Swamiji's message is a unique one. I commend his message to every one whatever the age, sex, profession, occupation or status.

Shri D.M. Chandrashekar
Retd. Chief Justice of Karnataka

Swamiji deals with problems and situations that all of us, young and old, face increasingly in the current fast moving life. Through stories from spiritual books, anecdotes, logic and inspiration, he helps us to reflect and relax. Notes contained in these books are easily comprehensible gems!

Gen. V.P. Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd.)
Former Chief of the Indian Army Staff